

EVERY SATURDAY:

A

JOURNAL OF CHOICE READING

SELECTED FROM

FOREIGN CURRENT LITERATURE.

VOL. III.

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Paris; and we have done very wrong in not putting the police to work long ago. Don't laugh at me, and call me a novelist in action. I never felt so sure of anything I had not seen as I am of Arthur Felton's having come to serious grief."

[To be continued.]

A GIRL AT A RAILWAY JUNCTION'S REPLY.

CHAPTER I.

A PERSON. — A Person who leant over the counter of a Refreshment Room at a Railway Station said, with a smile, —

"I think you must be the Young Lady at the Junction?"

"Which Young Lady at the Junction do you mean, sir?"

"The one bound in blue, price fourpence, at all the railway stations and all the booksellers and newsvendors of the kingdom, — Christmas Number."

(A quiet nod and answering smile from Behind the Counter.)

"You have no doubt —"

"Not the slightest. I know all about it."

"Know all about it?" said A Person.

"O, yes, I remember the whole circumstances connected with the collecting of the stories."

"Do you indeed? I wish you would let me know them too. I'm not going on till the three o'clock Ante-Meridian train, and it is now 11.55 Post-Meridian. You keep open all night, I presume?"

"O, yes, sir, all sorts and sizes of meridians. There is only one more train, — that at three o'clock Post-Meridian, by which the collector of the stories arrived."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, except the Parliamentary, when my business is done for the night, and home I go."

Let us describe the young lady. She was bound in blue, — a sky-blue merino dress. She was not a Double Number, — not by any means, — because, in the first place, she was single, as a young lady of twenty or thereabout might be suspected to be; her hand had not even been proposed for, so far as we know, except in the way of soliciting hot brandy-and-water, buns, and sandwiches at that hand. She was not a Double Number about the waist. Perhaps, in proportion to the waist, she was a Double Number about the shoulders; therefore, a very well-formed figure. She looked like a Christmas Number, however, as she wore the bright red berry and the green leaf of holly entwined in her hair.

The index — that is, her face — informed us that within would be found a kind, cheerful heart, and an honest and loyal character, combined with much penetration and insight into the disposition of others. You might have divided that index into many chapters: — Chapter the First, the Eyes, blue and soft; Chapter the Second, Cheeks of healthy ruddy; Chapter the Third, the Dimples; Chapter the Fourth, the cherry Lips to match; Chapter the Fifth, a little saucy Nose; Chapter the Sixth, pearly Teeth; Chapter the Seventh, an oval Face; and Chapter the Eighth, a cluster of rich chestnut Hair, — a bonny forest through which many five fingers beside her own had longed to stray, and never yet had done so.

A Person: "You don't seem vexed about it. I should have been very much vexed."

"Not in the least," said Behind the Counter. "I don't look like it, I hope?"

A Person was going to tell her what she did look like, and perhaps to repeat in more eloquent language the catalogue of the chapters we have given above, when, seeing his purpose, Behind the Counter commenced her narrative thus: —

It was within a month of Christmas time. The three o'clock Ante-Meridian train was due, and I went out to see it coming up the line, for, although I have been brought up in the Refreshment Room, I can never get quite used to the wonder that is ever passing by my door. Some people, I am told, who have a very fine horse, are, after owning it for years, as proud of its form and its breed as the day on which they bought it. Some love to look on a picture or a statue their life through, others are always lifting a favorite author down from the library shelf to read over again and again the same old familiar passages, written in dead or living languages. So I also never can get quite careless and indifferent to the wonder that is passing my door here day and night, — never get rid of my admiration at the precision of all the locomotive's movements, — never get rid of my astonishment that it comes to me year in, year out, with almost the regularity of Nature's workmanship. It is due, and it is soon here; it sets down its living load, takes up the living, screams to me, "Coming, coming!" and screams to me, "Good by!" — a wild creature put into harness by man, the mightiest he has ever controlled, but docile indeed if man uses him wisely. Some, I see, complain bitterly at his failings, but, take him all in all, there is much more to be astounded at for what he is than to cavil at for what he is not. I was looking at his fiery eyes gleaming through his spectacles a long way off, — watching him as he sped through the heavy rain, as careless of its pelting as if he had been amphibious, — when he dashed into the station and screeched out, "How do you do?" before I had got out of the little philosophical revery I have alluded to.

The guards jumped out, and ran down the sides of the train, hallooing out at the top of their voices, waking every one up, —

"The Railway Junction! The Railway Junction! Passengers for the Railway Junction!"

A little boy alighted and ordered his refreshment, a bun and a glass of water. He enjoyed both much, and left, forgetting in his hurry to pay the penny, until I reminded him of it, when he tendered me the half of the bun back and a halfpenny, as he had no more change, and had only consumed half the bun. In an instant he was in his compartment by the side of his dear parent, and The Guard had his whistle to his lips, when a muffled voice, through a comforter, exclaimed, —

"Hallo! what place is this?"

"The Railway Junction, sir," said the Guard, going up to the window.

"I'll get out. Let me out, I say!"

"Thought you was going through, sir."

"I'll get out, I tell you; here's my ticket. Is this the way you treat railway travellers? Where's my luggage? where's my luggage, I say?"

"In the van, sir."

"And where's the van?"

"At the end of the train, sir."

"There, again, who ever heard of the van being behind? I tell you, Guard, the van is the front. If you would take the trouble to fetch me a "Johnson's Dictionary" from Smith's stall, I'll show you what the meaning of van is. Why, if the stall isn't

closed! Another instance of railway mismanagement. Suppose I want a book, now, to read at night, how am I to obtain it? Tell me that, — that's what I want to know."

"Can't stop talking all night, show me your luggage, sir," said the Guard.

I was still at the door, and saw the guards and porters go down the line, and get into the van.

"Be good enough to point out your traps."

"Traps? Yes; the entire railway system is a trap, a decoy, a delusion for travellers."

"Look alive, sir."

"There, Guard, there; those two bandboxes in the corner of the van."

"What name, sir?"

"Bandbox Bother, Esq."

"All right."

The bandboxes were flung out. The Guard ran along to my door, shook hands with me, and laughingly said, —

"Odd character. Well-known collector from London. Why could n't he go on? Good by."

He whistled, and away they went. I fancied the train's lights behind looked merrily at me, and made particularly comical faces to-night, as much as to say, "Won't you see some fun with that gent?" and I followed the lights with my eyes and my feet, for I toddled down the platform to look after my friend the locomotive. The train whisked round a corner, popped one inflamed eye out at its back, then the other, and locomotive and train were no more.

I had forgotten the traveller; he might have gone in for refreshment. How careless of me! So I ran back, stirred up the fire into a blaze, gave an extra turn to the gas, and got behind the counter. I waited for a minute or two, when Grease, the porter, who puts the pomatum into the boxes of the wheels, came in. My back was turned, — I was looking —

A Person observed parenthetically, —

"Into the looking-glass. Bandolining, you know."

"Yes, I know, now," said Behind the Counter, "though I did n't then. Well, I was arranging my hair. Why not? I like to look my best; who does not?"

A Person: "You always do look that, I believe."

"Thank you. But to continue," I said to Grease: "What's become of the passenger?"

"He's at the end of the station, miss, standing in the wet, with a bandbox in each hand. He's talking to himself, and warned me off with a bandbox when I came near him."

"He's a Christmas collector, in an inspiration, Grease," I observed.

"Better be in a mackintosh, when he's standing in the wet, miss."

"He's perhaps thinking over a Christmas piece, Grease."

"I thought little boys only *did* them, miss," replied Grease, astonished.

I put on a shawl, and went down the station to look at him, for I was very curious.

When I came up to where he was standing, the rain was still pouring upon him, and the bandboxes, — he held one in each hand. The rain rattled on them, as though playing the Storm Galop on kettle-drums. He spoke to himself, as there was no one else to speak to, and he always courteously answered himself. Speaking to himself, the two might have numbered a hundred between them. Mind, I have not asserted that one was fifty.

A Person: "I take the statement without prejudice."

Behind the Counter continued: "He was a man with iron-gray hair."

A Person: "Yes, I have seen a great deal of gray iron in my time."

"Well, like a fire that has burned gray."

A Person said: "That will do better. That is, for instance, a fire that has gone out and gone to ashes, in the like way to our going out and going to ashes."

Bound in Blue continued: "He had a look of wildness and ferocity, his cheeks were lined, his complexion ruddy. He wore a thin coat and a comforter."

I exclaimed: "It is he, — it is the great collector of Christmas pieces."

Grease stood beside me, and misunderstanding the meaning, bade me not be alarmed. An express went by, and the traveller thus soliloquized: —

"What! Is that an earthquake, accompanied by thunder and lightning? Yes, but all is quiet, all is rusty. Such is life! Perhaps in that train went by a child who had never been a child, — just like me; perhaps he never had a parent, — like me. Woe is me! There is a bitter sense of namelessness about my train of life. I was a baby once. I was like the locomotive at the station when ready to start. There is then much excitement. There was doubtless a considerable bustle and excitement in my room when I commenced life. At the eventful moment of starting upon our journey each one gives its first scream, and then goes slowly on its career. Along the line of life. There is the up line and the down line of life. We take the up line first, till — let me see — about thirty-five or forty miles or years, and then we take the down line — up and down."

Here he paused and collected himself, while the rain still rained on his light coat and two bandboxes. He resumed after a time: —

"Just so, the train emerges into the green fields, and comes, like youth, to the first cutting, — the green frock of childhood and the cutting of the teeth. Then we get into a dark tunnel, — the measles of young humanity; then of a sudden a cry ahead, and a scarlet light of danger is shown, — scarlet-fever, perhaps. We ascend a gradient of life, and see all smiling and calm around us. We think it will last long on our journey. Yes, we do; but we get into a long and dreary cutting, with no prospect on each side. We get to town. Let me see; what is town like? Like marrying and settling. Then we take the down line. We move along, dragging a woman with us once beloved. The train passes old scenes, — we don't care for them. Nothing pleases us more, nothing frights us more, — no danger-signals, no cuttings or tunnels, till we arrive at the place whence we started, — to childhood's station again, without eyes, without teeth, without everything."

Grease, who had been listening bewildered, catching only the sense of the last words, remarked to me, "Serious accident, miss, that gentleman must have once experienced on a line, to come off as badly as that."

The passenger was now silent; but raising his left hand and bandbox to his left eye, fancying that the rain which was trickling off his hat adown his nose was emotional tears, and that he would wipe them off, the bottom of his bandbox burst out, and all his

little etceteras fell about on the platform, — clean collars, bear's grease, tooth-powder, hair-brushes, soap, and about ten quires of paper, with a hundred quills.

"Here's railway mismanagement! Here's railway mismanagement!" he broke forth in such a passion.

"Could n't be helped, sir," said Grease, touching his cap, and collecting the etceteras.

"Could n't be helped! Why was I left to stand here?"

"Because you like it, I s'pose. You've been talking to yourself about the Railway till your bandbox got wet through, and bust."

"Why was n't I taken to a drawing-room and the comforts of my own fireside at once?"

"Cos you would n't go to 'em."

"Will you walk into the refreshment-room and dry yourself, sir?" I chimed in.

A Person here remarked, with little good-will to Bandbox Bother, Esq., —

"And he refused you, did he?"

"No, he did n't." He said, "That's a good idea. I've found it at last, — the Christmas pieces at last! You are my man," he continued, going up to the porter, with much tenderness of voice, quite altered, and in the pathetic lecturing style, — "You are?"

Seeing that "You are" was not a clear question, he continued, "I mean your name."

"Grease, sir," said Grease, taking out his box of grease, dipping his fingers into it, and rubbing it over his hair, — a custom with him when he is excited.

"Grease!" said the passenger called Bandbox Bother, taking up a sheet of the wet paper, and making a note of it with his pencil. "Good and classic, that! And you get that lovely head of hair from lubricating the capillary roots with it." And he wrote on, exclaiming, "Good, — very good! A character, — quite a character!"

Grease looked puzzled. Grease was an odd man. His hair partook somewhat of the yellow tint of the pomade which he used. He was unable to walk upright, owing to the constant habit of stooping to put grease into the axletree grease-boxes; and as he walked along, with the grease-knife in one hand, the pot in the other, and his black fiery eyes, above a small pimple for a nose, peeping from beneath the peak of his cap, any theatrical traveller on the line would have been instantly struck by his similarity to Shylock going about with his pound of flesh, — fat flesh, — in his pot, — which he had at length succeeded, after much eloquence, in persuading his debtor to yield up. Grease wore corduroys and a yellow handkerchief tied round his throat. He was universally respected, and, indeed, beloved, along the whole line.

A Person here observed, "Come, come, Grease is a good fellow. Don't have such a large joke at his expense."

"Very well, let it be that Grease is a good fellow."

I returned to the counter, and Grease tells me what followed.

He stood respectfully waiting the leisure of the traveller, and observed at length, "You had better go to the fire, sir, in the refreshment-room."

"No, no, Grease; I have found you. I know what those places are like. I have tasted the discomfort of this station, and I will eat of its bitterness to the last. I will go into your room, Grease."

"You'll find nothing to eat there, sir, — not even

bitterness. I'm only a servant of the company; but, if I might say what I think to a passenger —"

"Say on, Grease, my good fellow."

"Well, the company don't care about letting strangers even into a porter's room."

"Ah, another point!" said Bandbox.

And he made a note of it, leading the way into the grease-room, respectfully followed by Grease.

The room had a strong smell of grease, which at first seemed to affect Bandbox with faintness; but he sat down and pulled off his coat and waistcoats, placing them before the fire to dry, lit a short pipe, and put some quires of paper on his knees, saying, —

"And now for your story, Grease."

"Are you a Parliamentary?" replied Grease.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean do you go on by the Parliamentary train?"

"Not if I know it, with such an opportunity," replied Bandbox Bother, energetically.

"Then I think you'd better go into the town and get a night's lodging, and not loaf about here all night."

"Well, I'll do so; but I'm certain that I shall find no accommodation."

"And I'm certain you will. You'll always find more than you give credit for, I know," was the rather rough answer of Grease.

"You are right, Grease," said Bandbox, suddenly taking up the rasher of bacon for Grease's breakfast, and putting it down carelessly on a cake of blacking. "I have found more than I expected. Here is a manuscript, I perceive. Ah, I see you are an author." But that was an impertinent remark, — be what you may, — and he put the manuscript in his pocket.

"You be —"; but here Grease calmed his rising ire, and added, "You are welcome, sir. Bacon and blacking will be a novelty to me for breakfast."

"Bad arrangements of the railway. Why don't they give you separate compartments for every article? The price of mahogany is surely not so high that a little more or less outlay on that material can affect the dividend of a large company."

At this moment Grease jumped up and exclaimed, "She's coming, sir."

"Who's coming? What lady are you alluding to, Grease? No tricks upon travellers, you know."

"I mean the Parliamentary train, sir." And out went Grease, with his pot and his knife, with refreshment for the iron traveller, and to convey directly to his iron joints that lubrication which mortal man obtains for his joints by means of digested meat, fish, fowl, vegetables, bread, wine, beer, water, cider, perry, ginger-beer, curds-and-whey, and water-cresses.

The strange, weird traveller stood looking at the scene, and talking to himself quite loudly.

"Indeed, this is most Parliamentary," he said. "The train makes a great noise and effort to get along, like Parliament, — shunting off this way and that way, like Parliament with its bills. While other things in life are progressing, Parliament is always behindhand."

"Not exactly," said Grease, coming up and touching his cap-peak. "She is in and off to a minute to-night, sir. It's left off raining, and as I'm going up town, I'll show you the way to the inn, if you like."

The traveller gracefully assented. He was re-

duced to one bandbox, which he preferred to carry himself, and Grease, packing up the contents of the other bandbox in a piece of oilcloth, they left for the town. On his way the traveller picked up a large stone, remarking that if he were kept waiting at the door, he might find it useful to knock it in with. But at the first tinkle of the bell, the landlord and landlady, with three waiters, a boots, and a chambermaid, appeared at the door, each bearing a candle in hand, and welcoming Bandbox Bother to the house.

"No gas alight, here, I see; and no gas alight in your Junction town. I'll note that."

These were his last words prior to wishing Grease good night, and rewarding him with three coppers, one of which, upon inspection, turned out to be of foreign manufacture and power of currency.

A Person said, "Well, I'm all attention."

"And so am I," said Behind the Counter. "Listen to that whistle; it's the last train but one Ante-Meridian, and yours. So good night."

A Person said it was his train, and he was sorry for it. Taking a hasty glass of whiskey-and-water, he shook hands, and was soon whisking away on the wings of Time by the aid of the locomotive.

CHAPTER II.

AT Post-Meridian 11.55 railway time, the next Post-Meridian after that of the prior chapter, A Person was in the same place, stretching his hand across the counter of the Refreshment Room of the Railway Junction. The young lady bound in blue had a somewhat different aspect to what she had when we described her in the last chapter. There was an addition of two things we could not note then, — two more dimples, one at each side of the mouth, just under the cheek, each one a purse to hold smiles and good-nature. And she was smiling now at A Person pleasantly, as she put forth a little hand without any whiskey-and-water in it, which was taken with warmth and respect.

"So you are going the same road to-night again, sir?"

A Person colored up rather, and said, —

"Why, yes. I'm compelled, — that is to say, I choose the night, as most convenient, — that is, as most agreeable"; and he turned the conversation into another shunting by remarking that there were no passengers alighting at the Junction to-night.

"No, business is very bad. I've only sold a bottle of ginger-beer, and had to open three before the passenger would be satisfied, as it was not sufficiently up to suit his palate, and being a tectotaller, he informed me that he was very particular."

"I'm going by the Ante-Meridian at three, as before."

"O, indeed!"

There was an awkward pause.

"I want you to continue the story of last night, if you've no objection."

"Not in the slightest."

"And no objection to a cigar?"

"You are the first that has asked me for many a long day, and my answer is this."

And she twisted out a slip of paper neatly till it was half a yard long, and handed it to A Person. He was a long time drawing in the flame, and he drew at it till the half a yard reached down to his fingers, and made him jump as it burnt him.

"You have a funny way of lighting a cigar."

A Person said, "I make the most of the paper, — others economize the cigar."

"Very good!"

"Very good, you think?"

There was a pause as awkward as before.

"You promised to continue the story of the Christmas Gentleman."

"Well, I too was curious to know it; and you who are curious to receive it shall learn what I know."

A Person, who seemed pleased to listen and not interrupt, looked at the ceiling sometimes, sometimes at Behind the Counter, — puffed, and listened, while pretty Behind the Counter began doing something mysterious. She thrust vigorously to the right with her right hand, then the left hand answered; then there was a hitching up by the right hand, followed by a rush of a kitten after the object thus compelled to be lively. The object was a ball of worsted. She was knitting, — earnestly knitting, — no sham work for show, — knitting woollen somethings for winter, and she was not ashamed of her occupation.

Behind the Counter said, —

"You know I am not awake all night and day."

"I should rather think not."

"My hours are Post-Meridian five till Ante-Meridian five."

"Quite enough too."

"Do you think so?"

"Rather!"

And A Person blew out three gallons of smoke at once. It seemed almost like indignation smoke.

"Well, you know I mention that merely to account for my having the narrative now and then continued on hearsay."

"Just so."

"The Bandbox Gentleman came down early the next morning and looked in on all sides for Grease, but you know Grease has to go to sleep too."

"Possibly."

"And not being able to find him he sauntered into the Refreshment Room. Our Boy was behind the counter. Have you ever seen our Boy? — the Boy at our Railway Junction?"

"Never."

"He is six feet three, and called 'The Giant of the Junction'; or as some, I am told, facetiously term him, 'Trio Junction in Uno.' I suppose it is a bit of fun about our Junction."

The Bandbox Gentleman took up a bun and questioned the Boy, —

"What is this, Boy?"

"A bun, sir."

"And this, Boy?"

"A sandwich, sir."

All of which Bandbox duly took note of, and observed upon with copious remarks on the foolscap paper.

A train arrived. No one came in for anything to eat or drink, for in truth there is no time; and as you know, great people only take luncheon and dinner, and poor people have nothing to spend.

"You were looking through me, sir," said the Curious Gent as the train moved off, — "I saw you do it, pretending not to see me."

"No, sir," said the Boy in charge of the buns.

"But I did not catch your eye," said the gentleman; "you seemed intent on some exterior object."

"You are small, sir," said the Boy, "and I might have looked over you into the train to see if any customers were coming."

"Overlook me, you mean. You seem to look at people here and not observe them, — consider them worthless."

"Possibly, sir," said the Boy in a temper, — "some on 'em."

"Have you a room in which I can dress my hair?" said Bandbox, after some thought.

"O yes, sir, — the Bandolining Room; walk this way."

And he took the gentleman into a room set apart for gentlemen tittivaters when they have time.

A Person said, "I supposed men never wanted to look pretty."

Inside the Counter coughed and laughed — at the kitten.

"All this," said Behind the Counter, "was duly recorded on plain foolscap."

And trying it up after he had bandolined himself, Bandbox went up the line without asking any one's leave.

"Halloa, you sir!" said a man on the line.

"Halloa!" said the Curious Gentleman, quite unconcerned, and walked through the tunnel.

"Halloa!" said the signalman outside the tunnel, "what do you want here?"

"Who are you?" said the London Bandbox Gentleman.

"I'm a signalman."

"Just the very man I wanted to see."

"What do you want with me? I don't owe you nothing, do I?"

"Not exactly. I'm collecting information along the line, and I want to talk with you."

"Look here," said the signalman. "You see that there spot up there?"

"I do, signalman."

"Well, a man said 'Halloa!' to me the other day from up there, he did."

"Did he indeed?" (And a note was taken.)

"And what did you say, signalman?"

"I said, 'Mind your own business!' That's what I said."

"Then you're not afraid of ghosts?"

"I'm afraid of the engine, that's all."

"Just so; that's the point."

"No, the point's lower down a mile and a quarter."

"But you heard a ghost up there saying, 'Halloa, down there?' and you were afraid of up there coming down here and causing you to be run over? Just what I thought! You'll do! I suppose the company does not object to your receiving a present?"

"I don't, sir."

"There, then!" and he hurried up the hill.

At first the signalman thought it was a spangle off a monkey's jacket that had slipped through his fingers, they were so horny. But he picked up her Majesty's coin with some difficulty, which is of silver, and next akin to a spangle.

I next heard of Bandbox Bother on the line a quarter of a mile lower down, where there are thirty branches going off as zigzaggy as a cracker or firework when it explodes in the air. He was touched on the shoulder by a policeman, and after much indignation, said that he was studying the lines, to know which he should choose.

The policeman assured him they were all equally safe.

Bandbox replied that the policeman was neither sentimental nor a philosopher.

"I want to look down them, to see which one I like best. Don't you understand?"

"Get a railway time-table, sir."

"And how should I be able to tell which line I like best by that?"

"Why, you'd find which towns they go to, and some one would soon tell you which was the prettiest, pleasantest, cheapest, and so on."

"That is simply absurd, policeman; if I look down the lines long enough I shall soon see by the appearance of them that which else would take me much time and study by your way to discover. I find that I shall have to remain a time at the Railway Junction, and I have taken up quarters at the Peacock Inn, in the town. I am going to see my friend Grease, and I shall come and see you again shortly, — in fact, I shall make the acquaintance of every one everywhere."

Bandbox Bother was equal to his word, — he was continually bothering every one. Grease had to put him gently out of his room on several occasions. The signalman called out as soon as he saw him, —

"Halloa, there; don't you come down here without you want to be taken up for manslaughter, for disturbing the signalman."

He was three times fetched back upon entering the tunnel surreptitiously. The Boy behind the counter locked the Bandoline Room when he appeared, and only sold him the sandwiches from which the passengers had picked out the meat, and last week's buns. I had the pleasure of serving him one day when he was rather late. He touched everything on the counter, tasted some things and spat them out, and smelt others. I said to him at last, pretending not to know him, —

"I suppose you are an American gentleman, as you spit everything out, and spit a great deal besides."

He seemed to relish the idea more than the fare, and with a comical smile accepted the character for a joke at my expense, replying instantly, —

"Well, gal, you aive found my nationality, I guess. I am of the eternal copper-faced race. Natur' aive planted his trade-mark on our physiognomies. I dew hail from the unlimited-liability land, I dew, where every citizen is a born king, gal."

I said, —

"In every citizen's own estimation."

"I larf at that sneer of yours, gal, I dew. I larf," and here he spat out some of the empty sandwiches it was customary to serve him with.

I said it was very unpleasant to have to clean the room after each one of the eternal race that had been in it eating sandwiches.

"Wal, gal, and s'pose you aive to clean it; I'm darned —"

I stopped him, and said, —

"You are not darned, sir."

"I tell you I am darned, gal," he replied, looking bewildered.

"Not about your wristbands, sir."

"O, nip me! frizzle me! knock me into a cock-tailed hat and a cocktail drink, this air too much!"

"Come, come, Mr. Bandbox Bother," I said, "drop the Yankee dodge; you know it was only a joke; and you hail from London. You are a London Londoner, no American."

"I suppose I am."

"Well, I'll give you a riddle, Mr. Bandbox Bother; put it down."

He produced his writing materials, and listened attentively.

"It's one, Mr. Bandbox, that I have constantly to use to young men who are curious."

"Very good, so that it is n't a Joey, an old Joe, you know."

"No Joey, I assure you."

"Well, then, I'm ready."

"Why are you like a telescope, Mr. Bandbox?"

"Well," said he, after reflecting, "because I'm tall and thin, can see a long way, and the principal strength is in my head."

"That's not bad, Mr. Bandbox; but my answer is, because I can draw you out, see through you, and shut you up."

"Very good," he remarked, and smiled faintly, and did not take it down. "I think I know now everything," he continued after a minute's reflection. "I've seen all the lines, and I have come to the conclusion they are all equally bad."

"There's another line," I said, sentimentally.

"Where's that?"

"Close at hand, — in your hand, in fact."

"Pooh! nonsense!"

"The line of life," I added with a sigh.

"Ah," he acquiesced with a sigh.

A Person here remarked, —

"I saw another line also."

"What may that be?"

"The line of beauty."

"I've never heard of that."

A Person said, —

"We have, however, both seen it," and he paid attention to his cigar and its smoke very quietly.

Behind the Counter, having for a moment thrust more vigorously than usual to the right, the left answering the action again, got once more into locomotive driving-rod-like style of regularity, and resumed, —

Bandbox sighed, and said, "There is my hand," and he held it out flat before me. "The lines on it," I replied, "you will see are an exact fac-simile of the railways of the country."

I took the needle with which I was working some cambric, and pointed out on his hand. "We will take your open hand to be England. The length is greater than the breadth, like our native land. Near the wrist here" — and I pointed with the needle — "there is a conflux of numerous lines all tending nearly to one point, and that point is London. That is the Midland which runs right up the middle of your hand to the four divisions of Scotland represented by your four fingers. Here is the South Eastern — there the Great Western — there the Great Eastern — there the Great Northern. This short one goes to Brighton; these are the lines across country; this one in the middle of the palm is the Manchester and Birmingham; this one I call the line of life, because, you see, on your left palm it goes our way, and it is my line of life because I get my living by it, and here is the spot — the Railway Junction," — and I gave him a prick with the point of the needle, rather smartly.

A Person said that was a lady's bit of revenge, and just like one. Did he understand it? What did he say?

He said, "O Crikey!" and, rubbing his hand, left with his papers, and I never saw him inside the Refreshment Room again.

A scream was heard a long way off. It was only

a railway scream, but it startled A Person and Behind the Counter, who had both been very quiet for five minutes, — one knitting, and the other blowing off the steam of his third cigar. A Person said, "By Jove! here's the three Anté-Meridian!" Behind the Counter handed him another glass of whiskey-and-water at his request. He took it with his right hand, which enabled him to offer his left hand open to her, and said, —

"Show me the Railway Junction in my hand."

Behind the Counter touched it lightly with the tip of her knitting-needle, and laughed.

A Person looked at the spot in his hand attentively.

The pretty knitter said, "Why do you want to know?"

"Curious about Bandbox, that's all."

The train dashed into the Station. A Person gave his left hand; Behind the Counter was giving her right one. A Person asked for the left. They shook hands. He drank his whiskey-and-water, and was whisked off into darkness.

He was followed by four luminaries for a short space. Two were stuck behind the carriage.

CHAPTER III.

AT Post-Meridian 11.55 railway time — the next Post-Meridian after that of the prior chapter — A Person was in the same place stretching his hand across the counter of the Refreshment Room of the Railway Junction. The young lady bound in blue took it, and seemed very much surprised — seemed to seem surprised, that is to say — and did it very well.

"Business down the line again, sir?" she remarked.

A Person said, "Yes, — somewhat important business this time."

Behind the Counter said she thought it was a lonely time to choose.

"I give it a decided preference. How's the kitten?" added A Person.

"There she is, on the rug beside the fire, rolled up like a teline periwinkle. Does n't she look jolly head to tail?"

"No wonder, by that comfortable warm fire," A Person replied, adding, it was rather a chilly night on his side of the counter.

Behind the Counter did not understand the remark, and went on knitting right and left at a considerably smaller circumference than last night, as she had arrived at the toes, and had not done so by any means the night before.

"I am curious to learn the end of Bandbox."

"So you shall, as I learnt it, for I told you I saw no more of him. After Bandbox had bothered the people on the railway, he took to the road — legally, I mean — and you must know that, a mile on the road from Junction, imbedded in stinging-nettles and dandelions, is a pretty little cottage, with a cabbage garden at the back. At twelve o'clock each day there poured forth a dozen little children, as jolly as sandboys, — that is, sandy-headed boys. The coincidence attracted the attention of Bandbox, and he one fine morning stopped one of the twelve sandy-headed boys with this question: —

"Little boy," — (the sandy-headed boy said "Zur" for "Sir,") — "how many little boys are there coming out?"

"Twelve, zur."

"And you come out every day at twelve?"

"Yes, zur."

"One for each hour," he reflected, and observed that it was a curious coincidence. "Are you all brothers, little boy?" he added, after a pause.

"No, zur."

"Then how is it you all live in the same house?"

"It's a school, zur."

"O, I see now,—it's a school. Thank you, little boy," and he withdrew his hand from his pocket. The little boy, misunderstanding the little movement, put out his own little hand. Bandbox patted him on his little head, and said, "I will e'en inquire the terms." So he walked in. He walked up stairs, and entered the school-room, remarking to the occupant, an elderly lady, who was an invalid, apparently, with the gout, from one of her legs being wrapped up in flannel, and lying on the table,—

"I'm glad you've got a fine day."

The old lady said, "You've got it too, have n't you?"

"Just so, ma'am."

After a pause, Bandbox continued,—

"I understand you keep a school."

"Well, and the school keeps me,—that's quits."

Here she caressed her leg in the flannel, and gave a howl of pain, exclaiming,—

"I wish, young man, you would shut that door after you. I suppose you've never had the gout?"

"Hem,—no, not exactly."

An awkward silence ensued, at length broken by Bandbox, who remarked,—

"I have taken a great interest in your school."

"Have you? Do you want to set up a school yourself?"

"Not in the least, madam." (Another pause.)

"I am a mere traveller."

"In what line of business?"

"On the railway line, and I was anxious to get all the information in my power about it."

"Well, what makes you come to an old woman for it, like me?"

"Sympathy, madam."

"Ah, indeed! I wish you was a tax-gatherer. You are so soft-hearted. Here, give me that laudanum lotion. Not that, stupid!—that's my drop of rum, for to-night. That. Now be good enough to take that woollen rag down from the peg."

Bandbox did as he was desired.

"My son is a long time absent to-day. Perhaps, as you are such a dear, kind, considerate creature, you would not mind rubbing my leg with the lotion,—it's awfully painful"; and shaking up the bottle, she let a little liquid flow upon the rag, which Bandbox, not being able to get out of the predicament, applied to her leg vigorously, remarking, in parenthesis,—

"I saw your hand frequently passing round and round, and fancied you were playing soft music as I heard no sound."

"Rubbing in the lotion at the window,—that's what I was doing, young man."

The door suddenly opened during this operation, and Grease appeared at the entrance. He was seemingly much astonished to see Bandbox, and to observe him thus occupied. Bandbox paused in his rubbing. Grease drew out his grease-box, and applied the yellow pomatum to his head. The scene was such as a Royal Academician would have been delighted to paint.

Bandbox exclaimed, "Why, if it is n't Grease!"

"Why, if it is n't Bandbox Bother!" said Grease, not at all pleased.

An awkward silence ensued, during which Bandbox worked vigorously at the old lady's leg, wrapped it up in flannel, and put it up to rest on the top of the table again.

"Why," said Grease, "we all hoped—that is, I beg pardon—thought—you had gone away long since."

"I've been looking you up many times, Grease, and could not find you."

"I have heard as much," replied Grease; "and I have heard, also—"

He paused.

"Well, what, Grease, my good fellow?"

"Why, I don't exactly like to say."

"Just so; something agreeable. Well, such things will ooze out."

"I don't know what oozes out generally. This concerns the company, sir."

"O, indeed, Grease!"

"Yes,—they give orders that you was not to poke about the station any longer."

"You are an odd soul, Grease."

"A rough diamond, aint I, sir?"

"Yes, very like a diamond, Grease."

"You'll excuse me taking a 'header'?" and Grease pulled out his grease-box again, and yellowed himself up.

"You are so good-natured, Grease, I must look in your eyes like a brute."

Grease nodded assent.

"I mean, for not inviting you to my inn to dine, but I have taken a particular fancy to this lady here."

"What, mother?"

"Yes, I have seen the dear children that she has reared up, and the gout she has had to suffer from, making her perform curious motions in the air with her hand, as though she were playing on a musical instrument."

"A hurdy-gurdy," suggested Grease.

"I could not conceive what it was, at first. Do you not think it a great waste of power?"

"Very great, sir; perhaps you'll excuse me cooking this bit of liver for my dinner?" and Grease proceeded with the operation, remarking, "You have n't fixed upon a line yet, to be off upon? We are very anxious about it."

"Not yet, Grease. I am going to explore the thirty roads; and, as I have taken a great interest in your mother, I want to bring her what I pick up on the roads."

"Not if I know it, young man," answered the old lady, testily; "perhaps you would n't mind taking a hint?"

"Not in the least, madam."

"Well, you see, you comes in here without being asked; perhaps you would n't mind leaving me and my son alone, without being asked? It's the only hour of the day we have to be together."

Bandbox arose. With much alacrity Grease was already standing with the door open. Bandbox, playfully, and with elegance, patted the lady's leg, encased in flannel, saying,—

"We hope her little tootsies will be all right next time," and bowing, left for the Peacock Inn.

But he missed the road, it seems, or by design strayed into the country, and it was nearly dark when he was returning to Junctiontown again. As he was entering the town, he felt some one shaking hands with him. Bandbox, as you now know, is a very superstitious character. He looked all round

him, and saw no one shaking hands with him, and yet again the shaking hands was repeated. A cold shudder passed over his frame, and heavy drops of perspiration came out upon his forehead.

At length it occurred to him, after looking all round, to look down, and there, singularly enough, was the individual who had shaken hands with him. It was a child of seven years old, of the feminine gender, with red hair and in a dirty pinbefore. Bandbox speedily recovered his former equanimity and was nearly swearing, when the little one dropped his hand, and clinging to one of his legs with both her arms, began kicking and roaring. A crowd of country people gathered round, and came at once to a speedy decision on the matter, with the wonted tact, quickness, and justice proverbial in the countryman. They one and all exclaimed in a chorus which would have done honor to the Italian opera, —

"Shame! shame! duck the Lunnoner in the pond!" and it seemed as if word would be followed by deed.

The dirty child burst into a flood of tears at the sympathy of the crowd, and roared out, —

"O, I be lost, that I be. I be lost, take me home to dinner."

"Ay, ay, take 'un 'ome to dinner, that be the best thing for you to do, Lunnoner, if you don't want a ducking, — which we'll precious soon give 'ee."

The chorus exclaimed, "Ay, ay, Lunnoner."

And Bandbox, feeling convinced, — or what is more likely, a sudden affection for the child, — raised it in his arms. The crowd gave way, and he bore it onward to the inn down the town.

"What's your name, dear?" said Bandbox.

"Duddy. Wipe my nose."

After Bandbox had performed this operation with his cambric, he said, —

"Gal or boy?"

"Gal, of course."

"What's your other name, Duddy?"

"Got none."

"Where do you live?"

"I don't live nowhere. I want my dinner," and Duddy began to scream.

Bandbox exclaimed, —

"A fashionable child, I'll be bound, to want dinner at this hour!"

The landlord was rather accustomed to the eccentricities of his lodger by this time, and he received him and the little darling with a bow.

"Got a child with me, landlord."

"So I see, sir."

"Do you know it? It's lost, and its name is Duddy."

"Never heard the name before in this town."

"I want to dine, and play at cards after," screamed the infant.

"Landlord, let's have dinner for two."

"That's me and you," said Duddy.

"Yes, darling. Would you like to be washed before it?"

"No, not if I know it."

And the weird man and the little darling remained looking at each other. It was a wonderful sight for a spectator to behold, but there was no spectator.

Dinner was at length announced, — dinner was consumed. The little one went in for everything, fingers and all; and, dinner over, got down and said, —

"Now, old 'un, what are you going to do to amuse me?"

This childlike innocence much amused Bandbox, and he laughed heartily. He replied, —

"You are such a clever girl, I don't exactly know what to do."

"Then," said Duddy, rushing up to him, and pinching his nose playfully, "I suppose, as you can't think, I must think for you. Call up the landlord, and let's have a rubber."

"A rubber, did you say?"

"Of course I did."

"And do you really play whist, Duddy, at your tender age?"

"None of your nonsense, governor!" said Duddy.

"I aint a tender age; but ring the bell, and you shall soon see if I can play."

Bandbox — much bewildered, much astonished — rang the bell, and summoned the landlord of the Peacock Inn, who soon after appeared.

"Our little friend here wishes to have a game at whist, landlord, and if you have no objection, I should feel much pleasure if you would join in."

"Not in the slightest. It's a rum little cove to play at whist, though; don't you think so, sir?"

"Well, rather," replied Bandbox. But a frown from Duddy silenced any further remark he might have to make; and he said, —

"Bring up a couple of glasses of brandy-and-water, landlord."

"Three," added Duddy, — "one for me."

"You don't drink brandy-and-water, Duddy dear, do you?"

"Well, I rather think so."

A dead silence ensued, during which it occurred to Bandbox that he was not unlike Wilhelm Meister, and Duddy the mysterious Mignon. He looked at Duddy as she sat peering into the fire. How could he have been so mistaken? The child before him was in figure and voice, perhaps, of the appearance of seven; but, from her beauty, already developing, and her advanced intelligence, she was assuredly more like eleven or twelve.

"That old fool of a landlord is a precious long time," said the second-hand Mignon at length.

"He is, my darling."

But he had scarcely spoken the words before the landlord appeared with a large tray, upon which smoked a big jug of water, on which tray there was also a black bottle, a silver ladle, a sugar-bowl, spoons, tumblers, biscuits, and two packs of cards. The landlord was a cheery man, and, placing the tray on a side table, drew out another with green baize covering, and put the cards upon them.

"Ready, sir," said he, placing chairs for three.

"Ready we are," exclaimed Duddy, jumping up in a hurry.

"You little precocious darling!" exclaimed Bandbox.

"O, nonsense, — business is business, — let's go to work."

The landlord rubbed his nose, with a finger on each side, for a moment or two, and looked very hard, if not to say severely, at the little darling.

The brandy-and-water was poured out for two.

"A little stronger for me," suggested Duddy, as he was about to give her a weak dose.

"Who'll take dummy, landlord, — you or I?" asked Bandbox.

"I'll take dummy," said Duddy, rather peremptorily, laying hold of the cards.

[Concluded in the next number.]

and bring it home to the mind with the greatest possible clearness and vividness. It never entered into their thoughts to conceive of a piece of writing as beautiful in itself, abstractedly from what it had to express; its beauty must all be subservient to the most perfect expression of the sense. The *curiosa felicitas* which their critics ascribed in a pre-eminent degree to Horace, expresses the standard at which they all aimed. Their style is exactly described by Swift's definition, "the right words in the right places." Look at an oration of Demosthenes; there is nothing in it which calls attention to itself as style at all; it is only after a close examination we perceive that every word is what it should be, and where it should be, to lead the hearer smoothly and imperceptibly into the state of mind which the orator wishes to produce. The perfection of the workmanship is only visible in the total absence of any blemish or fault, and of anything which checks the flow of thought and feeling, anything which even momentarily distracts the mind from the main purpose. But then (as has been well said) it was not the object of Demosthenes to make the Athenians cry out, "What a splendid speaker!" but to make them say, "Let us march against Philip!"

It was only in the decline of ancient literature that ornament began to be cultivated merely as ornament. In the time of its maturity, not the merest epithet was put in because it was thought beautiful in itself; nor even for a merely descriptive purpose, for epithets purely descriptive were one of the corruptions of style which abound in Lucan, for example: the word had no business there unless it brought out some feature which was wanted, and helped to place the object in the light which the purpose of the composition required. These conditions being complied with, then indeed the intrinsic beauty of the means used was a source of additional effect, of which it behooved them to avail themselves, like rhythm and melody of versification. But these great writers knew that ornament for the sake of ornament, ornament which attracts attention to itself, and shines by its own beauties, only does so by calling off the mind from the main object, and thus not only interferes with the higher purpose of human discourse, which ought, and generally professes to have some matter to communicate, apart from the mere excitement of the moment, but also spoils the perfection of the composition as a piece of fine art by destroying the unity of effect. For all these reasons I think it important to retain these two languages and literatures in the place they occupy, as a part of liberal education, that is, of the education of all who are not obliged by their circumstances to discontinue their scholastic duties at a very early age. But the same reasons which vindicate the place of classical studies in general education show also the proper limitation of them. They should be carried as far as is sufficient to enable the pupil in after life to read the great works of ancient literature with ease. Those who have leisure and inclination to make scholarship, or ancient history, or general philology their pursuit, of course require much more, but there is no room for more in general education. The laborious idleness in which the school-time is wasted away in the English classical schools deserves the severest reprehension. To what purpose should the most precious years of early life be irreparably squandered in learning to write bad Latin and Greek verses? I do not see that we are much the better even for those who end by writing good ones. I am often tempted to ask the favorites

of nature and fortune whether all the serious and important work of the world is done, that their time and energy can be spared for these *nugæ difficiles*? I am not blind to the utility of composing in a language, as a means of learning it accurately. I hardly know any other means equally effectual. But why should not prose composition suffice?

What need is there of original composition at all? if that can be called original which unfortunate schoolboys, without any thoughts to express, hammer out on compulsion from mere memory, acquiring the pernicious habit which a teacher should consider it one of his first duties to repress, that of merely stringing together borrowed phrases? The exercise in composition most suitable to the requirements of learners is that most valuable one, of re-translating from translated passages of a good author, and to this might be added what still exists in many continental places of education, occasionally practice in talking Latin. There would be something to be said for the time spent in the manufacture of verses if such practice were necessary for the enjoyment of ancient poetry, though it would be better to lose that enjoyment than to purchase it at so extravagant a price. But the beauties of a great poet would be a far poorer thing than they are if they only impressed us through a knowledge of the technicalities of his art. The poet needed those technicalities: they are not necessary to us. They are essential for criticising a poem, but not for enjoying it. All that is wanted is sufficient familiarity with the language, for its meaning to reach us without any sense of effort, and clothed with the associations on which the poet counted for producing his effect. Whoever has this familiarity, and a practised ear, can have as keen a relish of the music of Virgil and Horace, as of Gray, or Burns, or Shelley, though he know not the metrical rules of a common Sapphic or Alcaic. I do not say that these rules ought not to be taught, but I would have a class apart for them, and would make the appropriate exercises an optional, not a compulsory part of the school teaching.

A GIRL AT A RAILWAY JUNCTION'S REPLY.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"You are an odd little girl!"

"How much do we play for, landlord?" inquired Bandbox.

"Whatever you please, sir,—twopenny points, if you like."

"Don't be shabby," interposed Duddy, passing the cards from one hand to the other in a shower, like a conjurer. "Let's have sixpenny points and short whist."

The landlord and Bandbox could hardly help laughing at this innocent precocity of the child.

"I'll trouble you to lend me four shillings to mark with, Bandbox," exclaimed Duddy, getting quite familiar, "and to pay my shot if I lose, you know."

The landlord frowned, but Bandbox laughed heartily, at the simplicity, and gave her four shillings, and an odd one for luck, as he facetiously said, which Duddy at once spat upon, and jerked into the air, a mystic proceeding, to Bandbox at least.

The cards were cut, and it fell to Duddy to deal. This she did in a scientific shower not less able than the one which preceded the dealing. It was done like a master, and the landlord rubbed his nose now

harder than ever, and ventured an exclamation, which was, "My eye, you're a rum 'un!"

Duddy turned up an ace, and held eight trumps beside, in her own hand.

The game was hers, and she sipped her brandy and took her money with composure.

The landlord dealt, and turned up a three. Duddy played as skilfully as a veteran. Duddy knew every card out, and held good ones herself. She won every game, and she or her dummy always had a court card for a trump card, and a good show of trumps besides.

"You shuffles the cards in a rum way, my little gal," said Boniface, after he had lost one pound five and his temper. "Are you all on the square? how old are you?"

"Are you going to play?" demanded Duddy, waiting with her own cards and dummy's ready sorted, while the landlord was fumbling away to sort his. "Don't you bother how old I am, or else I shall cry, and be put to bed."

"And the best thing too," said the landlord. "Here I have n't got a trump in the hand, and you've got seven in your dummy. You're a cussed young cheat, — that's my opinion of you, and you're more like twenty than seven."

Duddy took up the money she had won, put it into her pocket, and began to cry, flinging herself into the arms of Bandbox, who severely reprimanded the landlord, who slunk down stairs, when he was told to send a light and a chambermaid to conduct the young girl to bed.

Kissing him affectionately, and patting him on the cheek, she resumed her childish tone, —

"Tankey, Bandbox, dear. Sha'n't I be glad to have breakfast with you in the morning! What time?"

"Ten, dear."

"O, how late, you naughty old boy! Tat ta."

The chambermaid lifted Duddy up, and, kissing her hand affectionately, she was taken up stairs, and tucked in.

Bandbox sat by the fire musing.

"What a wonderful child!" he thought. "How delighted her parents will be to have her restored! And what a pleasure it will be to me to restore the wonderfully intelligent and precocious child!"

The next day he rose at ten, and went down to breakfast. Breakfast was only laid for one. He rang. The servant appeared.

"Where's Duddy, — the little girl, I mean, that I brought here?"

"O, if you please, sir, you had better see master." And the servant left.

The landlord appeared immediately.

"I am sorry to trouble you, landlord, but I was asking for Duddy, our little whist-player of last night."

"Well then, sir, I'm sorry to say she's bolted."

"Bolted, landlord!"

"Yes, bolted, sir. And wus than that, the little devil's taken my watch and my missus's diamond ring."

"Impossible, landlord!"

"Very possible, sir. The police thinks it was a regular plant upon your —"

"Upon my what?"

"Your simplicity, and that she's a gypsy as has been stopped in her growth with spirits, so as to impose the more readily upon the public."

"Impossible, landlord! Mignon — I mean to say Duddy — could never be so base." He felt in his

pocket mechanically. "Why, landlord, I have lost my portemonnaie."

"Very likely, sir. It's gone to keep my valuables company."

Bandbox Bother, who had intended to take thousands of persons into the firm of his generosity, was taken in himself; he acknowledged it.

It was three weeks before Christmas, his birthday, and he had no heart to wish himself many happy returns of the day. The only return he could wish himself was a speedy return to town, a sadder and a wiser man, and he was soon going that way, singing, —

"I know a bank where I must get some cash again."

"And that is the end of Bandbox Bother in these quarters," concluded Behind the Counter; "and now you know all that I know."

The whistle of the three o'clock Ante-Meridian, which had, of course, waited till the conclusion of this narrative, was heard at the usual distance off.

"And so that is the end of poor Bandbox?" said A Person.

"That is his end," replied Behind the Counter.

"That is his end," repeated A Person to himself musingly.

"You said that before," observed Behind the Counter.

"So I did."

If we might judge, he would have liked it not to have been the end of the story. A Person seemed to be considering about something very thoughtfully; he took up his whiskey-and-water, and observing, "I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you; you have entertained me considerably," shook hands as if he had not been entertained, but, on the contrary, had been made very melancholy. He drank his whiskey-and-water, and was soon whisking away again on those wings of time so often spoken of, and which we must reckon, as they include all space, to be rather a long distance from tip to tip of each wing. He was followed as before by four eyes, two glaring red monitors of danger, protecting him from mishap; two of blue, softest blue, powerless to prevent evil, yet looking that wish. He became aware of the two this time, for he pulled down the carriage window suddenly, and catching sight of Behind the Counter peering out in the dark, waved his pocket-handkerchief to her as the train turned round the corner to be lost to sight.

Behind the Counter blushed very deeply, and retired to her seat by the side of the fire, and knitted the Parliamentary train in and out of the station, and then went to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

At the next Post-Meridian 11.55 Behind the Counter was alone. She was restless; she went to the door, watched the train in and out, and retired. Behind the Counter sat down beside the fire this night alone. She took up her knitting. The right hand went slowly, and the left hand replied slowly. Then the right went slower, and the left hand went slower still in reply. It seemed like the faint efforts of a weary machine to overcome the crank and make one more rotation. The right hand at length did not more than half its share, and the left fell beside her. The work was laid down, and the right hand soon bore upon it a bonnier piece of workmanship than a knitted stocking; it sank into

luxuriant chestnut curls, and tenderly clasped the pretty little head, supporting what seemed some weary and sad thoughts. It was all the hand could do, but it did it affectionately, gracefully. The left hand had a little solace to do too, for looking into the bright fire, Behind the Counter seemed to see at the end of a long brown lash a little diamond clinging to the top. It reflected bright golden rays of the fire; they were joyful colors, though the little diamond had not itself been born of a merry thought, so the left hand with the tip of its little finger gently removed the bright intruder. The little finger did a real service, as Behind the Counter saw the clearer, saw the discarded knitting, resumed the mystic stocking process, and was soon as busy as ever.

It was Post-Meridian 11.45 again, and Behind the Counter was already watching for the train ten minutes in advance. She seemed to take a more than usual interest in the fiery steed to-night, to have revived all the wonder she had expressed about it, or she would not surely else have been ten minutes in advance of its arrival upon the platform, waiting for that locomotive. It came, — not a door of the train was opened, no one was tempted by the minute's respite to try anything that was eatable or drinkable. The Guard whistled, and away went the train again. She must have been a thorough little woman of business, for she seemed quite vexed she had sold nothing; and, in consequence, turned over the buns and sandwiches, and rearranged them more tastefully and attractively than ever, making the stale buns almost look like just out of the oven. With a sigh at the want of patronage, she went round and dusted the glasses, polished the tumblers and spoons, and placed the chairs in different positions. Any spectator who did not believe in her business designs might have thought that she was endeavoring to drive away some unpleasant reminiscence, that she was beating it away with the end of her napkin, beating it off the chairs and tables, rubbing it off the counter, polishing it off the spoons and tumblers, stirring it out of the cherry-brandy, inconveniencing it, if it had settled among the buns and sandwiches, and was now finally trying to polish it off the looking-glass, and here she was quite successful. She found it at last, and drove it clean away, rubbed it off; but she could not polish off another reflection. She polished over it, and it came in again. That reflection that would not be got rid of was her own pretty, sweet-tempered face; out popped her face with the duster, in it came again, peep-boing and smiling pleasantly at Behind the Counter; when she smiled it smiled, and finally the two laughed at one another. So Behind the Counter was soon working away, right hand and left, at famous speed; and she treated pussy to some extra gambols with the roll of worsted, and thus the small Ante-Meridian got to be a larger Ante-Meridian, and she went off to bed.

The next Post-Meridian went out and made room for Ante-Meridian, without Post-Meridian bringing or leaving anything remarkable behind, except sixpence on the counter for a cup of tea; and Behind the Counter looked cheerless at the bad state of business. She was going to dust again, to dust away her thoughts, business or other, but things seemed too clean to be dirtied by dusting. An idea appeared to strike her, and like some sleepless people count a hundred or reckon sheep jumping over a hedge, to drive away thought and court sleep, she sang, to kill a thought, "Do, re, mi, fa," in a sweet

little sparrow chirp, then took an octave, "do, do," then "re, re," then "mi, mi," then "fa, fa." Why did n't she sing a song? Because it was something like her vigorous polishing effort, doing something suddenly and by force; and no song coming into her head she rushed into an old reminiscence, but she pondered at "re, re," and "fa, fa" led her off unwittingly into —

"Far, far away, there flutters at sea,
A sail that bears my true love from me."

"What nonsense! I have n't got a lover to go away with a sail, and a good job too, is n't it, pussy?"

And she took pussy up, uncurled the feline periwinkle, held her up by her front paws and kissed her warm nose, giving it a good rub, which did not enliven pussy in the slightest, further than to make her gape; and to hang, round-backed and listless, in her mistress's hands as if she did n't care about it. So she put her down on the rug, curled her round into a periwinkle again, tucking in her head and tail comfortably, and went to work herself cheerily and bravely, till that bit of a Meridian had come which permitted her to go to rest.

The fourth night had arrived since A Person had left for good, — at least it may have been for his own good, we cannot say whose else's it was for. At 11, Post-Meridian Behind the Counter walked out and saw that it was a dreadfully bitter night. The sleet and snow were coming down fast, and she thought what wretched weather for the poor engine-drivers and stokers, and the poor guards; and she added, as if suddenly recollecting them, and the poor passengers too, so cold and miserable. Yes, the poor passenger. She dropped the plural by mistake, but she smiled and corrected herself, —

"No, passengers, not passenger. And this is Old Year's night, too. The new one will come in harshly, — harshly enough for many a one, I'm afraid. God help them, and God help me!" she added reverently; and the simple words almost sounded like a prayer.

She had her knitting-needle in her hand, and fell a-musing at the little table before the fire. The point of the knitting-needle, which she held in her right hand, wandered over the table, and at length it seemed to be guided, as by design it made round and round marks. One might have almost been sure that the round and round marks meant a curly head of hair. We are quite certain they did, for that straight bold line is a forehead, — that clear aquiline line is the beginning of a classically-formed nose. The tip of the needle playfully draws a light moustache, pointing manly lips, bold chin, oval face; and when a lot of smaller twirls have twisted and twirled about endlessly, we are ready to aver that these are for whiskers, and are quite certain that with a rather ruddy, weather-beaten face from other climes, and giving the deepest brown, next to black, to the head of hair, and a lighter color to the moustache, we have A Person's portrait before us. So intent and so careful, so accurate had Behind the Counter been in drawing the portrait, that she had not heard the 11.55 Post-Meridian train come and go, for she had not been disturbed by passengers. She had not heeded the first strokes of the old year's time beginning its dying remarks about itself, — not heard it say eight, nor nine, nor ten, nor eleven. As it remarked twelve, and farewell to all, she started out of her reverie, and exclaimed, —

"New Year, New Year, I declare!" almost in accents of sorrow

"And a happy one may it be to you, — a very happy one!" said a traveller who had been looking in at the window of the door, and now hurried into the room unwinding his comforter, and disclosing A Person again.

"O, gracious me!" almost screamed Behind the Counter, and she turned deadly pale, and seemed inclined to fall upon the kitten, — "is it really you again?" And she put out both her hands with what seemed to be a feeling of complete happiness; then suddenly checking herself and withdrawing them, added, — "I'm sure I beg your pardon!"

"I want your two hands, if you please, — I won't take one."

They were given again with a blush, — A Person shaking both so heartily and so long, it seemed the happy commencement of the discovery of perpetual motion.

"Yes, I do indeed wish you a happy New Year!" was the only remark that he could shake out of himself, but he shook out of Behind the Counter, —

"Thank you, thank you kindly, I'm sure!"

After perpetual motion had, as usual with perpetual motion, come to a dead stand-still, A Person took off his hat and great-coat, and you discovered that the knitting-needle was quite right, and if it had gone on and shown us a handsomely-made, gentlemanly man, about thirty years old, with a reflecting, though a cheerful expression of face, it is about all that a knitting-needle could have done.

"It's a very cold beginning for Baby New Year," remarked A Person.

Behind the Counter answered, "Yes," and added, "Do come in and sit by the fire."

The privilege, never before granted, was respectfully accepted. A Person brought in with him a little parcel in white cartridge-paper, and placing it on the work-table, tried to undo the blue ribbon that bound it up.

"Do you want to untie that?" suggested Behind the Counter, — "let my little fingers help you."

And she put her little fingers on a knot, while A Person obstinately kept his bigger fingers on a knot beside the other knot, trying to undo his knot; and the little fingers and big fingers almost knotted themselves once or twice in their efforts to get the knot undone and get out of each other's way. At length the deed was done, and from the paper a very handsome gold and silver inlaid box was brought, full of worsted, and containing gold and silver knitting-needles. Behind the Counter drew back seriously and colored up.

"Ah! I was afraid it would be so," sighed A Person. "But you won't hurt my feelings, I hope, more than I would yours: you would if you refused. If I meant less than respect and thanks for your kind entertainment I should wound yours. Pray accept this with my best wishes for a happy New Year!"

"I don't know."

And she shook her curls thoughtfully, and seriously looked into the fire.

"Well, then, let's waive that question for a time. Let's put the box on one side. How's the kitten?"

This was a dexterous and diplomatic idea, and brought matters round to their former equable position.

The kitten was unrolled, pulled out to its full length, tail and all, stroked and patted, and rolled up again, with various clever remarks *à propos* of kittens, and of affectionate regard for this one in

particular, by both those who sat opposite the fire.

"I suppose," said A Person, "you would n't mind trying to make me something as nearly like punch, as you can, to drink the health of our baby friend, the New Year?"

"Of course, I'm bound to do the best I can to refresh the passengers, am I not?" answered Behind the Counter; "but I don't know how to make punch."

"Well, suppose I go round the counter with you, and assist you. Here is a famous big jug. We'll take this large measure full of brandy, to begin, and that smaller one of rum to follow, and empty them into the jug."

"Gracious goodness! that's enough for a dozen people!"

"Well, I mean it to be enough for all that are outside to-night as well as for myself. Rinds and juice of two oranges, two lemons — and have you got a little tea? — just three tablespoonfuls — that bottle of British champagne," and its neck was off and emptied at once.

A Person sipped, dropped lots of sugar into the big jug, tasted it, and said he thought it would do. He filled four glasses full, opened the door, and hailed a porter to communicate his invitation to his mates, and they had the honor of drinking his very good health, with a happy New Year to the kind passenger, and the same to you, miss! They would inform his honor when the next train was signalled, and closed the door upon him and Behind the Counter. Behind the Counter was prevailed upon to have a wineglassful, and echoed A Person's good wishes for the Baby Year. They had sipped very silently for a few minutes, when A Person said, —

"You tell a story almost like Scheherazade. Do you know who she was?"

"O, yes; I have read the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"Well, I came night after night to hear you, like the Sultan, but to-night the Sultan would like to tell a story himself."

"I wish he would," remarked the pretty Scheherazade, knitting away joyfully.

"Mind, the Sultan — that is, I — am a rare bungler; but my story has the merit which the first of critics admire most — by first of critics I mean the earliest of critics, the prattling ones. Mine is a true story, every word of it; and that is what they demand imperatively from every story-teller."

"Indeed?" said Behind the Counter, "yours is a true story?"

"Will you think me vain if I inform you that it is to be the story of my own life? It is that I wish to tell you, — particularly to tell to you."

"I shall listen to it very attentively."

A Person added nothing more to this, which was his preface; took a sip of punch, and began at once.

CHAPTER V.

THE ability to gain a presentation to a college — at college to gain distinction for learning and eloquence — caused a young man to hope for a great success in life. That young man was my father, and he thought, for him, that success was easiest to be obtained at the bar. He entered as a student at the bar, maintained himself by his pen, was duly called, and commenced his career with success. He so ably defended a case which involved the loss of a

large sum of money to a country gentleman, that he was invited down to that gentleman's country house at Christmas. The young barrister pleased so much, that every vacation he was a welcome guest at the Hall. The squire was a man of wealth, and felt great pride in his ancestry, — so much so, that he had determined his daughter and only child should marry a cousin, whose estates adjoined, and the two domains together would then be a magnificent property, and the blood would be carried on in the same line.

It was decreed otherwise. The young barrister and the young girl became deeply attached. The barrister pleaded his cause with the squire, but learned for the first time how little eloquence he possessed to move a man of worldly prejudices. He received an insulting refusal, and was forbidden the house. A correspondence was kept up between the daughter and the young man. Their love was sincere, and they resolved to risk the future. My mother left her home clandestinely, and married the man she loved. She was never forgiven. Her father's heart was even harder than she had believed it to be. I was their only child. The career of my father was equal to his expectations. It enabled him to live in some degree of elegance, and he hoped, when time had brought him wealth and renown, that his wife's father might, perhaps, relent. The hope was never realized, — the great success was never attained. Hard work and anxiety told upon his constitution. He became seriously ill, and his physician took a desponding view of his case, which was too rapidly verified. When I was three years old my father died. He had saved but very little, and there seemed no prospect for my mother but in the mercy of her father. Her letter, relating her misfortunes and her present condition, asking for mercy and help, was returned opened and read, with these words across it: "If you are to die in the most extreme want, from your act of undutifulness to me, I shall only consider that justice has overtaken you." It is hard to understand such a character in men who hope for pardon and salvation hereafter; but I fear there are many like-minded. All that can be said is, some among them deliberately wring their own hearts, — suffer as bitterly as they cause suffering, — revenging themselves upon themselves. It was so in this case, for he wrecked his peace of mind and the health and vigor of his body in the knowledge of the suffering he had caused. My mother realized all the little property of her husband, and kind friends gave advice and aid in the humble career she was forced to follow. But what could she do, who was only tutored to helplessness in life? She struggled for three years to maintain us both without the aid of friends; but she was too delicate, and sank gradually from grief and anxiety, added to, I fear, occasional privations. The old physician who had attended my father advised her to go into the country during the autumn. It was her only chance. She could ill afford to leave her occupation; but it was imperatively necessary, — she did so for my sake more than her own. Far away from town, she took the humblest lodging with laboring people. Their cottage was neat and clean, and the situation was healthy and lovely. The change was beneficial for a time; but in the course of three months my mother sank and died, — died at that cottage. All that she had in the world scarcely covered the expense of the funeral, and there was no provision for me.

Death came so rapidly, that a last appeal, which

my mother was about to make to her father, was never made, and I was left destitute and unknown on the hands of these poor people. I can remember this great grief clearly and distinctly, — remember the last kiss, the loving look, the effort to speak, the quiver of the lips, and the flight of the soul. I knew it all, and grieved as bitterly as though I had the mind of a man, tutored by trouble. But it would kill the young and tender if their grief could last, or if their little hearts were long oppressed with the dull weight of woe which the later years' grief leaves for life.

"It is very hard upon people in your circumstances," said the clergyman of the village, some months after my mother's death, to the laboring pair who kept the cottage where my mother died and I still lived, — "it is very hard upon you to maintain this child. The parish has provided for such cases, and it would be only wise of you in your condition of life were you to avail yourselves of the aid it offers."

The laborer held me on his knee, and was patting my curly hair, while the clergyman was looking rather severely at me and sucking the ivory top of his stick. The wife was sewing away vigorously at what I had heard was to be my new frock. They were both silent. I felt the horny hand stroking my head in a harder way than usual, and as if it wanted to stroke off the hair. It made the water come into my eyes; but I was frightened to say anything to him for fear of the gentleman with a white neck-handkerchief, a white face to match, and a white-headed cane.

"Well, what do you think? You seem, good people, not to be able to make up your mind."

"I have, so please you, sir. Mine was made up long ago. I don't know what my missus thinks."

"She do think as you do, dear."

"Well," said the clergyman, "what is it that you both think?"

"Why, so please you, sir, we will keep the dear little one that God has alike left on our hands expressly. We feel we are somehow selected above all others to do this work."

"Well," said the clergyman, "that's no doubt very kind of you, my good people, but remember you had to come last winter for relief yourselves, and you should think twice before burdening yourselves once."

"We will try to keep away, sir, from relief this winter. Last winter was uncommon severe."

"Very good. Good morning."

And the clergyman left off sucking his ivory cane, and left the cottage.

"Thee hast done well, John," said the wife.

He kissed me, and put me down gently, remarking, —

"I feel alike as though I had done proper, missus. Bless the boy! His mother came afore my eyes when I were a-speaking to the clergyman. I could have believed I saw the poor thing on her death-bed, asking me again by her look, as she did then, to be kind to her child."

Here I began to cry bitterly, for it recalled my mother too, and I buried my face in the lap of the good woman, who took me up and fondled me till I sobbed myself to sleep, but twixt sleeping and waking I felt her kiss and his kiss on my face, and heard him go out of his cottage, saying, "Not if I knows it, — not as long as I can yearn bread for us all, — not if I knows it," and he banged the gate after him.

I lived till I was eight years old with these good people. They loved me as their own, for they had not then a child. We fared ill and well at times. Well do I recollect how anxious I was to help, and when I went out for the first occasion at harvest-time to clap away the birds from the corn, that I shouted so much for my money that I could n't at last frighten a cock-robin five yards off in a bush, which stood staring at me in indignant surprise. The farmer came round at that moment, and laughed at my lost voice, but patted me on the head, saying,—

"At any rate, if one clapper be worn out, thou be'st always a-going with t'other, I hear. Thee be'st a good boy. Tell thy father I said so";—I always called him father now,— "come thyself for thy wages on Saturday,—don't send father."

And well I remember, also, the pride—more honest, I should fancy, than an emperor feels at conquering and annexing a new kingdom to his own—when I put seven shillings and sixpence into the lap of my foster-mother. "Five shillings for thy clapper, boy," said the farmer, "and half a crown for thyself, as a reward, and to teach thee always to do thine utmost duty in thy way of life, whatever way 't may be that God calls thee." I never have, I am thankful to say, forgotten the little moral lesson of the farmer he gave me with that half-crown. It has been worth thousands to me.

But that was my first week and last week of laboring then. On the Monday, just as I had my clappers in my hand, having tried my voice at a halloo, and found that I had sucked it back on sugar-candy, loud and clear enough to frighten away all the rooks and crows in the county, if they came into a field bent on petty larceny, a fly drove up to the door of the cottage. A thin gentleman of about fifty, encased in deep black, with knee-breeches and a large gig umbrella, got out, and was followed by a young man with a bundle of papers. They asked for my father.

"This way," said my father, bowing both into the cottage. My mother dusted all the chairs in the room for them to sit upon all, and was about dusting me off to my work, when the thin gentleman gripped me by the collar, and said,—

"It is about that young gentleman I am come."

"Indeed sir," answered my father, agitated.

"You are aware, or are not aware—I give you the benefit of either situation you like to take up—that this young gentleman is the grandson of Mr. So-and-So?" mentioning my grandfather's name, as I afterwards found out.

My father said,—

"I was not aware, sir, of—"

"Stop, my good man; you need not incriminate yourself,—that is to say, you need not reply before I ask you. His mother was—" mentioning my mother's name,— "and I am given to understand"—searching among the papers—"that she died in this house, cottage, hut, or premises"—and he added, by mere force of habit, "and all other appurtenances," when he was recalled by his clerk, who suggested, "Cottage, sir."—"Yes," cottage. She died intestate, I believe?" continued the elder gentleman, looking at my father severely.

"I don't know what she died on, sir."

"Very good. And you have boarded and lodged this young gentleman ever since?"

"Board and lodging?" inquired my father.

"What you mean I'm sure I don't know. Do you misseus?"

"We have nothing to do with a third party. If you wish to have legal advice in your defence,—that is, your answer,—be pleased to say so, and I will wait till you call in your solicitor."

Here the elderly gentleman took a pinch of snuff, and looked hard at my father again.

"I am a poor man, sir," my father was going on to say, apologetically, "and I doan't know that—"

But the lawyer replied,—

"We shall come to the question of money directly."

"As you please, sir."

"The young gentleman's grandfather has learned with considerable displeasure, for the first time, that his daughter being dead, his grandson is now dependent upon labor and laborers for his bread."

The solicitor paused, and looked right over the top of his spectacles, to see what effect this remark had made; but he had not produced any more effect than to cause me to slink up to my father, and for him to put my hand into his, and commence stroking down my hair with the other, in his usual horny way, although there was no fear now of his combing it out by that means, as there was before, for it had got hard and accustomed to it. The solicitor continued,—

"This young gentleman's grandfather desires that the young gentleman shall be given up into my charge forthwith,—forthwith, do you hear?—and for the purpose of legally claiming him, on behalf of his lawful next of kin, who stands *in loco parentis* to him, I have come provided with the necessary power of attorney,—paper marked No. 7, Mr. Clark," and he held out his hand.

The paper was given to him, opened, and offered to my father, who shook his head.

"O, it is duly legalized. There is the signature of his grandfather, attested by the local magistrate, the magistrate's signature by the lord-lieutenant, and the lord-lieutenant's of that county by the lord-lieutenant of this county, the lord-lieutenant's of this county by the magistrate of your own village. Here is the certificate of the birth of the young lady, his grandfather's daughter. Here is her marriage-certificate, and the certificate of her death. Here is the certificate of the birth of his father, and of his death, all duly and legally attested, I believe, beyond doubt, and my legal experience, I flatter myself, has not in the slightest failed. There is no will,—that is, as you admit, his mother died intestate,—therefore no guardian appointed by her. And now," exclaimed the legal gentleman, pulling off his glasses, "I should very much like to know what you have to advance in opposition to the just claims for the restoration of this young gentleman, in a smock-frock, to his legal next of kin, my client, his grandfather?" The legal gentleman wiped his glasses industriously, and repeated, after waiting a moment or two, "I should like to know, I say, what you have got to say in opposition?"

My father took me up in his arms and kissed me, advancing a step or two towards the solicitor, at which stalwart proceeding, seeming to fear that a physical opposition was meditated, instead of a legal one, so heavy and burly was the tread, the old lawyer seized his papers, and retreated rapidly behind the clerk, tying them up in red tape all the time.

"Doan't 'e be alarmed, you lawyer chap. I aint much of a talker, but I feels on this occasion as though I should like to say something, and that that something would be worth your taking down, if you would be so good."

The lawyer beckoned to his clerk, and said, —

"Take down his protest, Mr. Clark. Of course without prejudice, — without prejudice," and he advanced to my father one step, and reiterated emphatically, "without prejudice, sir!" who quickly remarked, not understanding the legal observation, —

"I aint got no prejudice against any living being or any occupation. A lawyer, in my eyes, is as good as an undertaker, an undertaker is as good as a jailer, and so on. Each man fills his calling, and each of those men is a necessary evil."

"Take that down, Mr. Clark; it strikes me as perfectly actionable."

"There, there," continued my father, "drop your writing, my good man, and be a sensible man for once in your life. What I wanted to say is, that I love this darling child," — and he kissed me tenderly and parted my hair. "Yes, and but for me and my missus, he might have known the misery, and, some people think, the dishonor of a work-house. For this dear child I would know that misery and dishonor myself. It is my belief that the grandfather left his daughter to die of, — well, lawyer, a dreadful malady, which it was in his power and in his power alone to cure."

"Take a note of that, Mr. Clark," dictated the solicitor; "we may obtain some valuable information for the family doctor."

The clerk was all attention, pen in hand.

"That malady was a broken heart, by reason of his wicked and onnatooral conduct. I think it ought to send him quickly to his own grave, an' he have a morsel of a man about his character, and be loike unto what Christian folk be loike in these parts."

"Dear me, this is very shocking, Mr. Clark! The man is quite illegal, and, I may say, illogical, in every word."

"I don't know no law, no, nor no logic; but I have a heart, and so have my missus, and we tell 'e the truth. Take the dear child," and the tears rolled down his cheeks, as I clung to him and kissed him.

My foster-mother embraced me and kissed me, and we kissed and embraced so much and tenderly, that the scene lasted too long for the business-like elderly gentleman, who broke in, looking at his watch, —

"Really, this is very inconsiderate on your part of the grandfather's interest, although you may perhaps mean it for my interest. That kindness I, however, — though not professional on my part, — protest against. I protest against it as an unnecessary consumption of time, which, albeit it will increase the charges in my bill, is not in the interest of the grandfather; perhaps not in the interest of this young gentleman, who may some day inherit that property."

"Well, I trust he may, and I trust, further, that that bad man who left his daughter to die of a broken heart may not in the course of time break down the honest, and just, and religious principles the poor cotter and his wife have endeavored to instil into my boy, and put into his mind the wicked ones the old man seems to be guided by. There is the child, — God bless 'un! God bless 'un!" and he put me down and strode rapidly out of the cottage.

I was running after him, when Mr. Clark laid hold of me unmercifully by the collar. I kicked and bit. He held on, and said, "Early age for 'sault and battery, — early age!" but held on.

The lawyer looked back at my mother, who was standing at the door.

"I have your husband's consent, as I understand it, to the removal of the child to his lawful protector. He makes no protest, — no protest, madam?" and he held up his pen inquiringly at her. There was no answer. "And no pecuniary charges are advanced either, as far as I can understand?"

"None, sir."

"Good day, ma'am. Lift the strong infant into the fly, Mr. Clark; carefully, sir, as becomes his position."

I roared out, — "Let me kiss my mither, let me kiss my mither!" and a kick that the infant gave Mr. Clark persuaded him to let me fondly embrace her once more at the door, and to mingle our tears.

The fly drove off to the railway station, and thence we went, many and many a weary hour, along on the journey.

The five o'clock train at the Junction was announced by the porter.

A Person said: "Do you wish to hear more?"

"Very much. I am deeply interested," replied the listener.

"I shall be here, then, to-morrow night at the same time."

He paid his heavy punch bill, and left the work-box behind by mistake or without remark.

The sleet and cold had cleared away, and the train came and went. Two handkerchiefs now waved at parting.

CHAPTER VI.

NEXT night, at five minutes before twelve, A Person was in exactly the same position before the fire, and continuing his story. The box left behind was on the work-table, and A Person, tapping its top gently, merely said, "Thank you," and continued almost at the same sentence where he had broken off.

The solicitor, Mr. Clark, and myself were received at the railway station by a livery servant. We were conducted to a handsome carriage. It drove off amidst the respectful attention of the officials and the general public, who had gathered round the station door.

We drove for about three quarters of an hour through by-roads, and came at length to a grand old-fashioned residence up an avenue of trees, filled with rooks that cawed us a dismal welcome. I was sent to bed, and saw no one that night except a very important portly-looking man in black, who I afterwards learnt was called the butler. My things were all changed the next day. The smock frock, heavy boots, corduroys, and cloth cap were substituted by a suit of velvet, fine linen, small hat, and small wellington boots, which were got on with much difficulty by the butler. I lived seven days without seeing any one but the butler, crying after my father and mother occasionally, and eating and drinking the rest of the time. The eighth day I was allowed a walk for my health's sake down the park with the butler, who was exceedingly disgusted with me, and said at last, "Master 'Arry, sir, I'm ashamed of you," when I picked up four pieces of wood nicely fitting, amateur or improvised clappers, two for each hand, and began clapping in the rookery, and roaring out at the top of my voice, "Hal-loa, halloa!" like I used in the cornfields.

I so astonished the respectable natives of the rookery, that they rushed forth in thousands, completely darkening the sky, and evidently wondering very much at the very vulgar interruption.

The butler continued: "That is very improper, Master 'Arry," but I did not heed him, and roared out, delighted at my prowess, "Halloa, halloa!" till I believe the whole rookery was emptied, except of the infirm and the juvenile.

"I must forbid such proceedings in future, sir," finally remarked the butler, now perfectly indignant.

"I'd shoot 'un if I wor the varmer about yon place. They eats arl the karn, — more wictuals than would do for a parish."

The butler merely condescended to shrug his shoulders, and walked on back to the house again at once with all speed.

The next day I was ordered "to prepare to meet my grandfather." That was rather a grand sort of way of stating it, but it meant simply, wash my face and hands, and be very quiet when I saw him. What I had heard at the interview between the lawyer and my foster-father and mother had been quite sufficient to prejudice my young mind strongly against my grandfather. Prejudice is a mild word; I think I hated him, and I felt a sinking at the heart when I was led into the drawing-room by the butler and left, after his announcing, "Master 'Arry, sir."

My grandfather was standing with his face to the fire, looking into it intently. He was a very tall, thin man, with very white hair, dressed in black. That was all I could make out as I stood patiently at the door, where I had been left, till I was recognized. I thought he had forgotten all about me, he was looking so long and so intently into the fireplace. He turned round at length, as if by a great effort. He was pale enough at first; but as he looked at me without saying a word, he seemed to me to lose all color of vitality, and grew like the marble image in the Hall, that I was told was my grandfather's bust. He sank back into the chair, — or rather fell back into the chair, — muttering —

"Her very self! — her very self! Advance, boy." The tone of the latter words was that of command, not a sparkle of tenderness in it. "I have sent for you to live at the Hall. You will henceforth regard me as — as a friend. Be obedient, child, to my wishes in all things, or you may rue it. Do you want anything?"

"I warnt to go yome to faither and mither."

The gentleman in black shuddered. I fancy that had I spoken reproaches a year long for my injured mother, I could not have wounded his feelings more, — not have told him better what neglect I had suffered at his hands, and what mercy and lovingkindness received at the hands of strangers. He rang the bell, and said to the butler, "Take my — take him," pointing to me, "to his room," and he turned from me as though I had been an animal, whose safe keeping he had given directions about.

I soon altered, — my dialect gave way before tutoring, and the strict discipline of every one about me towards me cultivated me sufficiently in the course of three years to make me, as the butler now informed me, a young gentleman fit for the station of life I had to fill.

My grandfather tried three or four times to assume an approving and a kind tone, but the frown lowered on his brow ere the words were half-spoken, and I continued to feel more hate than love

for him. Gossiping servants had told me the whole history of my parentage, — my parents' trials and troubles, — and the rest from my mother's death I knew full well. I could not pardon the man who was the cause of such misery, and though he tolerated me, he too could not pardon me, and if he came upon me suddenly he would start and turn away. The house grew hateful to me, and sometimes I felt that I was wronging the memory of my dead mother by eating the bread that had been denied to her, by receiving the shelter that had been withheld in the hour of her need. The feeling grew stronger and stronger. I had another growing unconquerable wish also, that of seeing my good foster-parents. I wanted to see them, and then to go my own way in the world. What I had so long desired and brooded over I soon put into practice. Four years after I had been an inmate of the Hall, I was grown a strong lad, a well-instructed lad, and the solitary reflection over my situation and the career of my parents had caused me to be riper in judgment than many youths of three years older than myself. I was liberally supplied with money, it is true, but for a long time I made no use of it. I saved and hoarded for some purpose or use which I felt would soon require all my funds. The occasion came about unexpectedly in this way. Late one evening after dinner I was ordered — I was always ordered still — to go into the drawing-room after my grandfather had dined. He was standing before the fire looking into it much in the same position I had seen him when I first arrived at the Hall. After a pause he said, —

"Boy, I am going to send you away from the Hall for a time."

He seemed to expect a reply.

"You do not answer. Would you prefer stopping here or going to Eton to be educated?"

"I should prefer leaving this place, sir."

"You are not happy here, then?"

"No, sir."

"And the cause, if I may inquire? You have everything you want, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"I should like to know the cause, then."

I was silent.

"Are you obstinate, or a fool?"

"Neither, sir."

"Well, then, speak plainly; tell me why you wish to leave this house, — to leave — to leave me, sir. Tell me, sir, at once, I command you."

It would have been possible for him to have turned the strong affection of a boy. I felt that there was at some moments of my life a pain at my heart that it had been so long unknown to sympathy, and as he commenced the last sentence, with that impulse I was advancing towards him, but the harsh "Tell me, sir, at once, I command you," caused a revulsion of feeling. An ill-timed word has turned mighty interests, broken hearts, ruined fortunes, and given death itself; so I replied, —

"I should be happy, sir, to leave a home which recalls daily the misfortune of my parents, and the wrong that my mother received at your hands. You left her to misery, broke her heart by degrees; to you, as she owed her life, she owed her death."

The old man fell back into a chair and wept bitterly. It was too late. I, so young, had dared to become the judge to condemn the father of my parent to renewed misery and self-reproach. I felt mingled emotions of regret, shame, and pride; but above all I was determined that not another night

would I pass under this roof, not another day owe gratitude to this man I had injured, and who had wronged my parent. I could not be so mean as to stay after the words of revenge in my mother's name which I had uttered. I would act in accord with my speech. Packing up a small bundle, and taking all my money, I left the house immediately, went to the railway station, and booked for London. The road grew gradually familiar to me as I looked out of the window. I recalled the journey with the solicitor and his clerk, "And there,—there," I exclaimed, "is the very station at which we got in!" The train drew up, and I leapt out with a cry of joy. Yes, I recognized the place again, and in an hour I should be in the arms of the dear beings who had been to me succor and love in the time of my helplessness. I ran along the lanes till I reached the cottage which looked down the valley,—opened the garden door. It was to me as but yesterday I had left; the very same flowers and vegetables were growing in the garden, as I thought, in the same spots. I could distinguish them in the light of the harvest moon. There was a candle burning in the cot. I looked in at the lattice window. I think I should have jumped through it in a minute more. There sat my father, there my mother. My father was reading from a large book; I would creep upon them, and make them beside themselves for very joy. I touched the latch. I recalled then that when I left I could not reach within a foot of it, and had to kick at the door. "How wonderful," I said in my philosophy, "are the ways of Nature!" but I did not occupy myself much with her. I lifted the latch as softly as though I had been a burglar, and this had been a diamond-merchant's store; so softly that I put my head right in, and listened to my father's voice. He read from the great book these words: "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." My father leant over The Book to my foster-mother, and said,—

"They be words of comfort, missus, to us, and it seems loike as if they have a special meaning for us now. Let's stop there, and believe in 'em with all our heart and soul and faith," and he closed The Book with a bang, which woke up a baby in a cradle, that commenced screaming, calling down the indignation of my mother upon my father's head, as she went and rocked away at its cradle as though she had been the roll of the Atlantic, and baby's cradle a storm-tossed bark. It lulled it to sleep as many an Atlantic wave has lulled to a long and last worldly sleep. She sat down again. Neither had noticed my head stuck through the opening, and neither hardy and roughly-used body had felt a morsel of draught. I could not remain longer a spectator, and rushing in, exclaimed, "Father! mother!" flinging my arms round the neck of my father.

He shook himself like a Newfoundland dog would shake himself at the sudden and unexpected embrace of a toy terrier, and sent me flying into the middle of the room, and my mother rose stiffly and said,—

"Well, I'm sure, young gentleman, and who may you be, that comes into decent people's houses of a night with such practical larks?"

"Who may I be!" said I, understanding how matters stood. "You wait a moment," as a sudden conceit suggested itself, for I enjoyed the prospect of their astonishment and joy when they had found out who I was; and I ran out of the house, and be-

gan hallooing, like I used to halloo to the birds, "Halloa! halloa!" I roared out loud enough to frighten all the rooks and crows out of the parish. My foster-father was not a man of particularly slow mind. He caught at it at once, and, ye powers! what a sensation I had the next moment! Bears may hug, but they don't hug when they are loving, I should fancy; and here was this dear old bear hugging the very life out of me for love, and pushing away the she-bear, my mother, who wanted to have a share of me and the hugging, which she eventually got after some trouble. I fancy the hugging lasted about half an hour altogether. After that I had to tell them all about myself since I left the Hall, and about my grandfather; and they told me all about themselves, the beans and the wheat, and the turnips, the cows, horses, pigs, poultry, and people of the parish. They wanted to know how I came to find my way there. I was rather confused, not having made up my mind on that point myself as yet, and at last invented the tremendous one that I was going to sea, and on my way to join my vessel. "Where be'st going to, boy?" That was a poser. I had n't thought of that; but it was necessary that I should think of some place, and so I said, as the readiest thought that my inventive faculties suggested, Australia.

"Ah, a fine land that,—next to the ould country."

As soon as the first transports were over I pointed to the cot. They both laughed, and my foster-father said—

"Yes, she be a year old. You bean't jealous, be ye, my boy?"

"Not I, father. Let me kiss her and show you," so I took the little thing in my arms; she was the chubbiest, fattest little morsel in the world, and I kissed her tenderly for a long time, till my father remarked, laughing,—

"Harry will kiss off the little bit of nose she 'ave got, and it bean't much."

Therefore my foster-mother took baby in her arms, held her out once more for me to kiss, and put her in her cradle again. We talked a long time that night, and I was informed my usual shake-down was ready for me, but I must put the extra length I had got since I had left, upon a chair. We all went to bed very late; still, I could not sleep; a thousand thoughts came unbidden into my head; I had no desire to put my light out, and it suggested to my mind rather that I should take an exploring expedition over the cot I knew so well. So I stole softly down into the front room first to look for the baby. That babies don't sleep all alone I was not then aware of, but found baby was gone, cradle and all. Everything seemed just as of yore,—dried herbs, dried books, dried stuffed birds, dried chairs, ornamental broken china, and so on. There was old "Jack the Giant-Killer," my own book, and I took it up to look at it. Out of the leaves dropped a long piece of paper; it began, "Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom," and so on, and so on, and was addressed to my father, informing him that this was a writ for so much money: the date was only two days old. I only remember two thoughts, one of them my sorrow for my poor struggling father, that this blow should have fallen upon him so soon after his first-born; the next, what a shame it was that our gracious ruler's name should be affixed to that which did so much wrong, and brought so much sorrow into happy homes. A third thought, and the best one of the three, occurred to

me soon after. I stole up stairs, brought down my bundle, and listened. I heard two noses snoring a duet. There was no fear that I had woke them. Twelve pounds fifteen shillings, said this awful bit of paper. Ah, assuredly it was to that misfortune my father had alluded when he closed the sacred book. I took a piece of paper and wrote with my pencil, —

"I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

I put fifteen sovereigns upon the paper, which left me then but three in all, and saying to myself, "I too will trust in those good words," stole forth, closing the door gently after me, sure that they would find the little treasure there in the morning, as no one ever in those parts had lost a mite through keeping open house, — that is, house-door on the latch. The joy I had in having done so good a turn to my dear foster-parents made me as happy as a lark, — as a whole covey of larks, — and I rattled on at double speed on the main road to London.

Day came and found me many miles away; night came and found me but twenty miles from the great city; and now I began to talk to myself about what myself was about to do, and for the first time I felt a little alarmed, for I was overcome by fatigue. I remembered what I had said to my foster-parents, and I resolved to abide by that statement. I had had enough of walking; the railway was close at hand, and I sped the last twenty miles to town by its aid. I had one fixed idea now, — that idea was Australia. I slept at a dirty little place near the station, and I was neither robbed nor murdered, as it is usual in adventures, but I was charged modestly, and found myself in possession of all my remaining funds, and my bundle, and my clothes, and — I had quite forgotten it, one grows so accustomed to luxuries — in possession of my gold watch and chain. I went to the London Docks straightforth per omnibus, walked round and round, and then, with my heart in my mouth, went on board a vessel, and told the truth to the master. The ship exhibited a large printed bill, announcing its immediate departure for Sydney. He listened and questioned, but he could only find out the truth. I asked him if he would take me as a sailor, — no, boy, — as a cabin-boy, — if I gave him five pounds. "Yes, and treat you as well as I can, for you have not roughed it, I can see." I sold my watch and chain for seven pounds, and the next day bought myself a few necessities with the remainder of my money, and went on board to eat the ship's fare and make myself generally useful. This I did to the satisfaction of captain and mate. My little bit of practical education, reading and writing, and so forth, proved invaluable; and I was of great assistance to the mate in taking down and booking the cargo, stores, &c. The sails were shaken out at last, land was lost, and the boundless ocean before us. I had not much time or inclination to sentimentalize, and before long was deep in all sorts of duties which are in the line of the cabin-boy's life. I made a very kind friend or two on the voyage, who promised me a lift when we got to Sydney. They were as good as their word, and, indeed, took so much interest in me, that there being a slight contention they tossed up which was to have me. I fell to a kind-hearted elderly gentleman of the name of Bowen. He sent me up country to ride after his cattle, and bring them in to the station. One fine day I speculated upon a dozen for myself with my saved wages. One other

fine day, three years after, I found myself master of a hundred cattle, the next year of two hundred. Indeed, there wanted a peculiar kind of arithmetic table, or rather a special rule of proportion, to account for the sudden increase of numbers. I need not say that I was soon my own master. I became lord over, and owner of, as much land as I could ride round in a day. In a word, I was a rich man. Wealth rolled in after wealth, like the succeeding waves of a gold-tinged, inward-setting tide, and I could compare with the best of the land, — had bailiffs, farms, thousands of head of cattle, and a few ships.

While I was one day in Sydney, I heard that I had been advertised for in the old country. A copy of an old *Times* with the advertisement was shown me by a merchant. My grandfather had died and had never made a will. I was the heir. To England I came. I have arranged my affairs and here I am, ready to start back again and enrich my adopted land with the proceeds of my grandfather's lands and fortune.

"That's my story, — that's who and what I am," said A Person, as the train, which had, of course, obediently waited till the conclusion of his history, came rushing in.

He shook hands heartily, patted the kitten carefully, and said he hoped Behind the Counter would be able to get a little warm punch ready by 11.55 next Post-Meridian, by which time he should be back again. The shaking hands was very different to-night to that we have so often described. What it was like, the reader this time, can fancy for him or herself, if gifted with a little expansive power of imagination. We are not even going to repeat our small joke about meridians, or to say whether eyes followed or eyes looked out, whether handkerchief waved to handkerchief, nor do we intend to say anything about the leave-taking. All we can say is, end of Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VII.

BEHIND THE COUNTER had all prepared at 11.50 for the incoming train. She no more doubted the arrival of A Person, than she doubted the correctness of Bradshaw's time-tables. She uncured young periwinkle, and she coiled her up again. She uncured and curled-up chestnut bonny hair, and put the red berries in it in a much more coquettish way than they were the night before. She was quite satisfied. There was a dreadful rush of customers to-night as the train came in. One of them actually purchased three buns, another had six-pennyworth of sandwiches, and a fourth took off a bottle of ginger-beer, bottle and all, honorably paying for the bottle. At the back of these customers, respectfully waiting his time, and so smiled at that the three customers turned round with disgust at the display of attention and preference, was a handsome gentleman, quietly waiting his turn. He actually was polite enough to open the door for the exuding passengers, and saw them well out. When the engine screeched "Good by," he closed the door behind them, and, without permission opened the door of the counter, walked in, shook fearfully hard by the hand, and pulling pussy's tail, and rolling her inside out and then inside in back again, put her to roast again by the fireside. He took his seat quite at home, and said, —

"Well, this is jolly!"

"What?" inquired Behind the Counter.

"Nothing," replied A Person, correcting himself, but added, "I suppose the punch is ready?"

"Ready sir, ready!" answered Behind the Counter, touching her hat nautically.

"The tumbler for me and the wineglass for you," said A Person.

We must observe that the gold and silver inlaid box was on the work-table, and seemed to have been her property for ages. The pretty blue-bound berry-decked girl was going on at a famous rate with the worsteds of all the colors of the rainbow, by aid of the gold and silver knitting-needles.

Who shall tell and describe what silent happiness reigned in each heart that evening, before pussy? We shall not.

A Person had not asked permission to send up the spiral wreaths of smoke which floated over Behind the Counter's head, and seemed to be inclined to reverse the nature of things, and come down upon and settle affectionately and lovingly on her hair, but were obliged to ascend and leave mortals behind to their own selves. Silence having been enjoyed, — we say enjoyed, for it is a greater bliss than the most brilliant talk to those who are in a mood to understand it, — A Person said, —

"The Sultan awaits the story of your life, Scheherazade."

"Well, he shall have it. Very simple it is, — no light and shade, no gold regions, no great ancestral home, but a simple village story."

"Very good, be it so; I am all attention."

The knitter with the gold and silver needles began, — began by pulling pussy's tail, for which she was duly rewarded by a playful pussy bite.

I had no one to tell me of my earliest days. I was born and brought up till five by the most worthy of parents, but they were peasants and cotters. My father was a farm-laborer, and my mother did many things to add to the store; but farm-laboring, and good housewifery, and good efforts all wait on good health, and unfortunately my father, when I was four, caught a cold, and it fared badly with him for a long time. My mother grew anxious, and sickened too. Never was there a more honest and worthy couple. I have heard — for I was too young to know aught from them — that I was born late in their wedlock. They lived and loved together, sickened together, and died within a week of each, and there was I all alone, at five years old, mistress of the cottage furniture and wardrobe, which, being sold by a benevolent auctioneer, fetched more than value, — all he could possibly squeeze out of the bidders to start me in life in the workhouse, where it was decreed I was to go. We had an old lady in our village who had been very kind to my father. She was a very religious old lady, — gave him a Bible, out of which he was wont to read every night. She came in at the sale of the goods, and looked round sorrowfully. The auctioneer of our place bowed very respectfully to the old lady, and ordered a chair to be given, when everybody receded from her immediate presence out of respect. The auctioneer went on. Lot 83, — A fryingpan; twopence was the response, and no further bid. Lot 84, — A chaney tea-service, all the pieces broken; two shillings was the result of a struggle. Lot 85, — A child's crib and bedding in tolerably good condition; four shillings was the result of the struggle. Lot 86, — the library, — principal volume, a family Bible, — and the auctioneer held it up.

"Hand that Bible down to me," ordered the old lady.

And the volume was respectfully passed along, with considerable touching of caps and rough bowing.

The auctioneer was, perhaps, as respectfully inclined to the lady as any one present, though his own degree of life did not necessitate that respect. He said, —

"Hand Mrs. Tenton the Bible, Stephen."

And the man addressed brought it to her, and touched his hair respectfully.

There was an unusual auctioneer's pause; he would not have paused so long had he been selling a dozen head of cattle. The old lady put on her spectacles, and opened the Sacred Volume at the spot where the green ribbon was last left by my father or mother as a marking-point. The old lady read aloud amidst a dead silence, —

"And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me."

"Yes, yes," she said; "John Braiding, I did not give thee this book in vain, — it hath brought good fruits. How much is it, Mr. Bairn?"

The auctioneer looked puzzled.

"I beg pardon, madam, but I know you will excuse me. These articles are put up for auction, and it is the highest bidder who receives the lot."

"Just so, Mr. Bairn. I am very ignorant in these matters. But I bid fifty pounds for this Sacred Volume, which, in the sentence I have read, teaches me and all around me our duty. I shall take this little child, for whom these goods are being sold, in His name, as I am told in these sacred words, and the fifty pounds shall be invested for her."

The respectable old auctioneer began blowing his nose, and then wiping his brow far above his olfactory organs, and, in fact, was unable to conduct the remainder of the business satisfactorily. The people slunk away, as though they were doing a wrong thing to bid for the goods, and the auctioneer and Mrs. Tenton remained alone.

"Mrs. Tenton, mam," said the auctioneer.

"Sir," said Mrs. Tenton.

"You will excuse me for being so regular and business-like, but you know that an auctioneer is a mortal."

"Yes, Mr. Bairn."

"But believe me, we do sometimes, when we are knocking down the goods and chattels, feel very great sorrow for the misery of others, but it must be done."

"My dear sir, I am not a business woman by any means, as you will say at my bidding fifty pounds for what should go for ten shillings, but I am open to acknowledge that the world must go round."

"Must go round, madam. Yes, it really must go round," exclaimed Mr. Bairn, delighted at the excuse that had been made for his calling, of knocking down people's things.

"Very well, let it be understood, — it must go round. And now, where is the baby?"

"She is up stairs, madam."

"Bring her down."

The lady had no idea that she was not ordering an auctioneer to knock down an article of furniture, and so the elderly, white-headed auctioneer left his rostrum and ran up stairs to fetch the lot that was not knocked down, — myself.

An old woman had been holding me, not knowing exactly what was to become of me till I was taken to the workhouse. Mr. Bairn took the lot from her, and brought it down.

"A pretty little baby, Mr. Bairn."

"Yes, mam, but I don't like babies, and I think I could sell them in niggerland, — going, going, gone"; and he tapped his desk facetiously, to get over the undignified act he had been doing as an auctioneer. It was of course all nonsense on his part, because he would himself rather have bought all the little babies of the Southern States, and have set them free after weaning them at his own expense — if he had had the money — than let a little dear one want a home, pap, or even, if it came to that, a caraway comfit for its "leetle" spasms inside.

A pretty little baby was taken home by Mrs. Tenton; a pretty little baby — myself — grew up, of course, well cared for, until poor Mrs. Tenton was called away from this world. I was fourteen then, and I believe, well educated. I only got her dying kiss for sole remembrance. (Here Behind the Counter pulled the kitten's tail, which act caused her to stoop and rub each side of her eyes.) Mrs. Tenton had an annuity, and no more; it left her with this world, and went elsewhere. At fourteen I turned into the world, quite capable of taking care of myself, thanks to the dear soul, and under the guidance of Heaven! I became a junior teacher with nothing a year. I then became a junior teacher with five pounds a year. I developed some musical powers and became a teacher of "do do, re re, mi mi, fa fa," at ten pounds a year; but it all died out, — one school-mistress failed, and another failed, and at last I was glad to find myself where I am, and where I have been for these last five years; and now you know my history."

"But you have not told me everything," suggested A Person.

"Everything, REALLY," answered Behind the Counter, as though her words were doubted.

"It is not your fault, I acknowledge."

"Come, come, you are not fair," continued Behind the Counter, rather annoyed, and knitting away as if she were in very great earnest indeed.

"But you have not."

"But I have."

"Very well; let me tell you where you have failed; you don't mind me filling up the omission, do you?"

"Not in the slightest."

"Well, what is your name, in the first place?"

"Mary, sir."

"Just so. Mary Braiding."

"How do you know that?"

"O, every one here will tell me. And your father lived in Lancashire, at Duddenham."

"How do you know that, sir?"

"And he was employed by Farmer Simmonds, of the Sweet Valley."

"How do you know that?"

"Well, Mary, if you will give me your hand I will tell you."

Mary hesitated.

"Come, I am sure you do not distrust me, Mary, and you feel that your hand is as safe in mine as in your own father's, brother's, or —" and here he paused, and said something which we were quite unable to catch, but it made Mary scarlet-colored like.

But she gave A Person her hand. It was very wrong of course, — every one will say so. We answer, on her behalf, and on the behalf of thousands of young girls so situated, — "There must be a beginning, and provided the beginning be a loyal,

honest, and virtuous one, we do not care if it be by a lip on a hand or by a hand in a hand." Suffice it the hand was given, and taken.

"Did it ever strike you, Mary, that it was singular I should return night after night?"

"Yes, it did," said Mary, blushing.

"Very well, Mary. You are straightforward; so will I be. I did come for an especial reason; there was no accident about the matter."

Mary appeared to be uncomfortable.

A Person seemed agitated also, for he blew up a dreadful amount of smoke, as if he were endeavoring to envelop himself in a cigar cloud prior to vanishing with Mary. After he had blown off — after the cigar atmosphere was gone and he was again visible — he continued, —

"I sent from Australia to England a hundred-pound note to my foster-father and mother as soon as I had got such a note, but I believe it is not necessary to add that logically. The letter was returned through the Dead Letter Office, with the remark that they were both dead, and that the child could not be found, which was an unusual stretch of official post-office communication in a dead language."

A light seemed to break in at once upon the mind of Mary, and the blush rose turned to a lily, in order to be floral in our description.

The traveller continued, —

"When I came to England, my first duty was to go to the village, where I learned all the history of my foster-father and mother from the village historian. I learnt, however, how their daughter had been brought up, and from the village I followed her to the localities of her various situations, and found her finally established here. Here I, Henry Stephens, found Mary Braiding."

Mary Braiding was, at this moment, crying in her handkerchief, therefore we cannot describe her appearance except as regards her hands and dress, and that would not add information that would illustrate the emotion with which she listened to Henry Stephens; but Henry Stephens, whom we have so long kept without a name for the purpose of a tremendous surprise for our readers, and whom we shall now call Henry Stephens as frequently as possible to make amends to Henry Stephens for not having called Henry Stephens Henry Stephens before, — we were going to say Henry Stephens spoke very low, in a voice that sounded very loving and gentle. Henry Stephens took one of the hands of Mary out of her cambric pocket-handkerchief, and held it in his own in a manner just suited to his voice, — that is, lovingly and gently, — and it was, by design or not, left where it was. Henry Stephens said, —

"I found more than I expected. I found a beautiful, good, true-hearted, well-educated girl. I found something more. I found a curious sensation about here," — putting the small hand that he had taken out of the cambric handkerchief upon the left side of his coat. "I had never known it before, and I began to have a great anxiety on my mind, also, at the same time, — in fact, many anxieties. I wondered if Mary's hand were free to be taken out of a cambric pocket-handkerchief as I have just done, — that was my first anxiety, — namely, if it were free to remain in mine, I inquired, and heard it was. Then I wondered if mine were worthy of taking it, — that was another anxiety. Then, if it could be taken by me, a fourth anxiety was if it would press mine in answer to all my doubts, and say, 'By that

pressure Mary assures you she will be your wife, and go with you to the distant land of your adoption."

There was no alteration for a moment after these words in the face of Henry Stephens; watching narrowly the next moment there was an alteration, there was a shade of anxiety upon it; watching the third moment, there was visible a rush of blood to the face and a glorious smile of gratification on it that made him look tremendously handsome. What could it have been? There was not a word spoken, but perhaps there had been an answer given in lovers' language, which is often to the outer world an unknown tongue. At any rate, however, there was no mistaking the proceedings of the next movement after the last.

He actually kissed her hand three times, and she let him do it without more opposition than a tender smile, and a change in the color of the aforesaid rose to a deeper-colored rose. If she had spoken, — perhaps she did speak afterwards, for it would not be polite of us to be present during all interviews now, — she doubtless said she had felt at once an instinctive friendship and interest in him, — that it was her belief she must have inherited some of the affection of her father and mother for Henry Stephens; or, if not that, there must have been some other reason for feeling that interest of which she did not know the cause. As soon, however, as she began by his story to divine who he was, the inheritance of her parents' love for Henry Stephens became no longer a mysterious instinct, or otherwise to be accounted for, but arose from a real and natural cause, and she felt that, — that she could, — of course you understand, reader, what she could, and what she said.

Henry Stephens lodged at the village inn. At a modest little furnished cottage, hard by, lodged Mary Braiding. From that cottage, two weeks after the night we are alluding to, Mary Braiding suddenly disappeared. She was nowhere to be found, — not on the high road, or at the station, or in the village. Henry Stephens himself could not find her, — indeed he never tried to find her. Things were changed indeed, our readers may imagine, to come to such a pass.

They WERE changed, — Mary had changed to Mrs. Stephens, and of course Mary Braiding was nowhere to be found. The honeymoon was to be spent in England, but they were obliged to leave before the honeymoon was over, for their moon had not, like ordinary cases of moons, a first quarter, a second, a full moon, and exit moon. Mr. and Mrs. Stephens's moon seemed as if it would never disappear. Twenty-eight days were not sufficient for its calendar operation, so they resolved to be off to Sydney, take their moon with them, and eat their moon there. Eat it, because it was really and truly full of honey, — a honeymoon, — and being so large an article there seemed no doubt that the honey would be sufficient to last all their lives.

THE FOUR RACES OF THE NEW WORLD.

[From "New America," by W. HAPWORTH DIXON.]

WHITE men, black men, red men, yellow men — all these chief types and colors of the human race — have been drawn into company on this western soil, this middle continent, lying between China and the Archipelago on the one side, Africa and Europe on the other, where they crowd and contest the ground under a common flag.

The White Man, caring for neither frost nor fire, so long as he can win good food for his mouth, fit clothing for his limbs, appears to be the master in every zone; able to endure all climates, to undertake all labors, to overcome all trials; casting nets into the Bay of Fundy, cradling gold in the Sacramento valleys, raising dates and lemons in Florida, trapping beavers in Oregon, raising herds of kine in Texas, spinning thread in Massachusetts, clearing woods in Kansas, smelting iron in Pennsylvania, talking buncombe in Columbia, writing leaders in New York. He is the man of plastic genius, of enduring character; equally at home among the palm-trees and the pipes; in every latitude the guide, the employer, and the king of all.

The Black Man, a true child of the tropics, to whom warmth is like the breath of life, flees from those bleak fields of the north, in which the white man repairs his fibre and renews his blood; preferring the swamps and savannahs of the south, where, among palms, cotton-plants, and sugar-canes, he finds the rich colors in which his eye delights, the sunny heats in which his blood expands. Freedom would not tempt him to go northward into frost and fog. Even now, when Massachusetts and Connecticut tempt him by the offer of good wages, easy work, and sympathizing people, he will not go to them. He only just endures New York; the most hardy of his race will hardly stay in Saratoga and Niagara beyond the summer months. Since the South has been made free for Sam to live in, he has turned his back on the cold and friendly North, in search of a brighter home. Sitting in the rice-field, by the cane-brake, under the mulberry-trees of his darling Alabama, with his kerchief round his head, his banjo on his knee, he is joyous as a bird, singing his endless and foolish roundelay, and feeling the sunshine burn upon his face. The negro is but a local fact in the country; having his proper home in a corner — the most sunny corner — of the United States.

The Red Man, once a hunter of the Alleghanies, not less than of the prairies and the Rocky Mountains, has been driven by the pale-face, he and his squaw, his elk, his buffalo, and his antelope, into the far Western country; into the waste and desolate lands lying westward of the Mississippi and Missouri. The exceptions hardly break the rule. A band of picturesque pedlars may be found at Niagara; Red Jackets, Cherokee chiefs, and Mohawks; selling bows and canes, and generally spunging on those youths and damsels who roam about the Falls in search of opportunities to flirt. A colony, hardly of a better sort, may be found at Oneida Creek, in Madison county; the few sowing maize, growing fruit, and singing psalms; the many starving on the soil, cutting down the oak and maple, alienating the best acres, pining after their brethren who have thrown the white man's gift in his face, and gone away with their weapons and their war-paint. Red Jacket at the Falls, Bill Beechtree at Oneida Creek, — the first selling beaded work to girls, the second twisting hickory canes for boys, — are the last representatives of mighty nations, hunters and warriors, who at one time owned the broad lands from the Susquhanna to Lake Erie. Red Jacket will not settle; Bill Beechtree is incapable of work. The redskin will not dig, and to beg he is not ashamed. Hence, he has been pushed away from his place, driven out by the spade, and kept at bay by the smoke of chimney fires. A wild man of the plain and forest, he